

Title	: CHRIST ' S FAITHFULNESS TO WHOM?
Author(s)	OTA, SHUJI
Citation	Hitotsubashi journal of arts and sciences, 55(1): 15-26
Issue Date	2014-12
Type	Departmental Bulletin Paper
Text Version	publisher
URL	http://doi.org/10.15057/27042
Right	

ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ: CHRIST'S FAITHFULNESS TO WHOM?

SHUJI OTA

In my previous paper on the genitive construction πίστις Χριστοῦ¹ and the absolute use of πίστις in Paul's letters, I wrote²:

During the last fifteen or so years, the subjective reading of the phrase has gained a stronger foothold.... Within the debate, however, one important piece of evidence still continues to be overlooked or undervalued: the *peculiarly illuminating use of πίστις in Galatians 3:23 and 3:25*. (Italics added)

Since increasing weight is now placed on Galatians 3:23-25 in exegetical attempts by recent scholars tackling the interpretation of this genitive construction³, my above remark may now look rather stale. However, it has not lost its propriety, because most scholars still seem to be unaware of the essential nature of the word πίστις in these verses. In these circumstances my scheme—a *holistic understanding* of Pauline faith—remains the only viable approach to obtaining the real force of the apostle's teaching. Both proponents of the objective genitive ("faith in Christ") and of the subjective genitive ("faith[fulness] of Christ") have attempted to interpret these verses in their own ways, but their efforts do not appear to have been successful. My aim in this paper is to point out some of the fundamental shortcomings in the existing major interpretations proposed and thus shed light on the root of the problem with Galatians 3:23, 25 and other places where πίστις appears in the absolute state, and restate the adequateness of my interpretation from a renewed angle.

I. Arguments for the Objective Genitive

Advocates for objective reading take the phrase ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in Galatians 3:22 in the sense of "through faith in Jesus Christ" and the purposive clause ἵνα ἐκ πίστεως δικαιωθῶμεν in Galatians 3:24 as meaning "that we might be justified by faith." The problem is how to maintain a logically consistent interpretation also for Galatians 3:23 and 25, where we

¹ This phrase is found in different forms in seven places of his letters.

διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Rom 3:22, Gal 2:16a)

διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ (Phil 3:9)

ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Gal 3:22)

ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ (Rom 3:26)

ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ (Gal 2:16b)

ἐν πίστει ... τῇ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ (Gal 2:20)

² "Absolute Use of ΠΙΣΤΙΣ and ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ in Paul," *AJBI* (Annual of the Japanese Biblical Institute) 23 (1997) 64-82. Here, 64f. (http://www2.rikkyo.ac.jp/web/sota/AJBI_23_64-82.pdf)

³ Douglas A. Campbell, *The Quest for Paul's Gospel: A Suggested Strategy* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2005) 225-230; Hung-Sik Choi, "ΠΙΣΤΙΣ in Galatians 5:5-6: Neglected Evidence for the Faithfulness of Christ," *JBL* 124 (2005) 467-490; Ardel B. Caneday, "The Faithfulness of Jesus Christ as a Theme in Paul's Theology in Galatians," in *The Faith of*

find *Πρὸ τοῦ δὲ ἐλθεῖν τὴν πίστιν* (“However, before the *pistis* came”) and *εἰς τὴν μέλλουσιν πίστιν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι* (“for the *pistis* which was to be revealed”) in 3:23, and *ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς πίστεως* (“But now that the *pistis* has come”) in 3:25. If ἡ πίστις in these verses is taken simply as “faith,” then it comes down to insisting that human believing has just come, and has been revealed indeed, as an eschatological event. However, faith did exist before Christ, as is evident from the case of Abraham (Gal 3:6, 9).

To clear this problem, advocates of the objective genitive seem to be able to adopt at least two alternatives, aside from their effectiveness.

One is to take the definite article τὴν (v. 23) anaphorically and relate it with πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (“faith in Jesus Christ”) just referred to in verse 22. This alternative, however, does not work well. If it is carried through, τὴν πίστιν in Galatians 3:23 has to be distinguished sharply from any qualitative or generical faith, as Burton did.⁵ In fact, the latter is at least as old as Abraham according to Paul and therefore cannot be spoken of as “having (recently) come.” In this connection we need to take a close look at interpretations by two advocates of the objective genitive: James D. G. Dunn and Hans D. Betz. While the former accepts the anaphoric interpretation (though in a somewhat different way from Burton’s version), the latter presents a non-anaphoric interpretation.

On Galatians 3:23 Dunn comments:

Paul does not necessarily deny that others believed as Abraham believed prior to the coming of Christ, but affirms that God’s purpose and promise have been realized in Christ (cf. iii.19), so that he is now the natural and proper focus for the promise-releasing-and-fulfilling faith. Prior to that we were held in custody under the law.⁶

This interpretation is potentially exposed to at least four criticisms. First, while taking the definite article anaphorically, Dunn writes, “Paul does not necessarily deny that others believed as Abraham believed prior to the coming of Christ.” This explanation appears to spoil the Greek article of its strict anaphoric force he sees here. If “this faith” refers to “‘the faith’ just referred to” (v. 22), then it logically cannot be Abraham’s or others’ faith. It must be Christians’ faith in Jesus Christ and nothing other.

Secondly, if Abraham and others believed even before the revelation of the faith, how does their faith relate with “this faith,” that is “faith in Jesus Christ”? Dunn’s attempt to find an answer to this question is worked out in terms of the “contrast between promise and law” and “law (for Israel) and faith.”⁷ He writes that “the law’s role as protective custodian lasting till faith such as Abraham had exercised could be expressed with reference to the fulfilled

Jesus Christ: The Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies, ed. Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2009) 185-205; Martinus C. de Boer, *Galatians: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011).

⁴ This εἰς should be taken as indicating a goal (purely telic sense).

⁵ Ernest De W. Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921) 198. A different type of anaphoric reading proposed by Douglas Moo is grammatically questionable. He maintains that “the ‘faith’ that ‘comes’ in 3:23 and 25 might refer back to the participle τοῖς πιστεύουσιν at the end of verse 22 rather than to πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ earlier in the verse.” Douglas J. Moo, *Galatians*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013) 47.

⁶ James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, Black’s New Testament Commentary (London: Black, 1993) 197.

⁷ Ibid, 198.

promise,” and that “Faith (the faith of Abraham, and faith in Christ) brackets the interim epoch of the law.” His anaphoric interpretation is pressed to end with a quasi-identification of “the faith of Abraham” and “faith in Christ.” In reality, however, they differ significantly in several respects.

Thirdly, as Dunn’s inclusion of “the coming of Christ” in his explanation shows, the “coming of the faith” is naturally to be related with the coming or revelation of Christ in some sense or another. Needless to say, faith in Christ is possible only after he has come, but the mere fact of his coming cannot generate faith. In someone’s having faith in Christ the existence of Christ who has come and his *faithworth* for the believer are taken as a given, and his or her faith has been generated through the gospel of Christ (Gal 1:7, 11-12). So whenever faith in Christ is materialized in any believer, a *correlative* of his or her faith, Christ’s *faithworth*, must exist in this faith relation between the believer and Christ. The concept of *faithworth* is indispensable for logically understanding Paul’s teaching on faith. Can it be identified with the “faith [fulness] of Christ” in the sense insisted on by recent proponents of the subjective genitive? Of course not. For Christ’s *faithworth* does not mean Christ’s faith[fulness] toward God per se, but the worth Christ has for the believer in the faith relation. It is a *correlative* of faith.

A fourth and final question as to Dunn’s interpretation is equally of fundamental nature. Paul seems to think the coming or revelation of τὴν πίστιν as a *singular* (but *not necessarily external*) event that has created a decisive shift in salvation history. In addition, revelation “denotes a disclosure given from heaven, with heavenly authority, usually of heavenly secrets.”⁸ If so, is it correct to think with “faith in Christ” that it has now been *revealed*? Can the “coming of this faith” (Gal 3:23) be taken as “a disclosure given from heaven”? It is by no means synonymous with “many people having now come to believe in Christ.” Since ἡ πίστις is here an object of *revelation*, we cannot think that human faith in Christ itself has been revealed. What has occurred is a singular event involving repeated occurrences of faith in Christ in believing people living in history. Dunn explains this revelation further as “the coming of the era of faith, the human response that is the necessary complement to the coming of the seed (3:19)”⁹. Similar as it may look, the concept of “human response” is not the same as that of “faithworth.” In any case, the coming of the *era* of faith should be distinguished from the coming of faith in Christ.

So then should we understand “faith” here to be something like a “metonym for Christ himself” and affirm that “‘Faith’ and ‘Christ’ are interchangeable in this passage”?¹⁰ Certainly not. The coming of πίστις is related with the coming of Christ, because unless otherwise faith *in* Christ cannot take place. However, it does not follow from this that “Paul speaks of ‘Faith’ (*pistis*) in a personified way, as a virtual synonym for Christ (3:24).” This type of interpretation is a shrewd substitute for the anaphoric exegesis and suffers from the latter’s failure. To grasp what Paul says correctly we must adopt a totally different exegetical scheme.

Next let us look at Betz’ interpretation. Showing no interest in an anaphoric exegesis of

⁸ Ibid, 53.

⁹ Dunn, “ΕΚ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ: A Key to the Meaning of ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ,” in *The Word Leaps the Gap: Essays on Scripture and Theology in Honor of Richard B. Hays*, ed. J. Ross Wagner, C. Kevin Rowe and A. Katherine Grieb (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008) 364.

¹⁰ De Boer, *Galatians*, 82, 103, 149, 193, 238f. Here, 149, 238. He contends that “‘Faith’ here is something that belongs to or defines Christ himself.”

τὴν πίστιν in Galatians 3:23, Betz develops a seemingly *ad hoc* interpretation of the unit (3:19-25). He explains the coming and revelation of τὴν πίστιν as referring to the beginning of “the period of the faith” in the wake of “the coming of Christ” and concludes that “It [= faith] became a general possibility for mankind only when God sent his son and the Spirit of his son.”¹¹ According to Betz, “πίστις (“faith”) describes the occurrence of a historical phenomenon, *not the act of believing of an individual*” (italics mine).¹² This may be for avoiding the illogicality of insisting that human believing has now been revealed, but it is strange to exclude “faith” or “the act of believing of an individual” from this “historical phenomenon.” For it certainly consists in a holiscity that involves at least God’s sending his son *and* faith held by individuals who have heard the Gospel and come to believe in God and Christ (Gal 3:2, 5).¹³ Without the latter the faith phenomenon cannot be a phenomenon, however rich God’s grace to send his son is. For it to remain as more than a mere “possibility,” it must be actualized in human beings in their act of believing.

If the faith phenomenon is holistic, how should we understand the word πίστις in Galatians 3:23 and 25? Should we begin with the lexical *sense* of πίστις that describes human beings’ act of believing or other? There is no logical necessity to do so. In my view πίστις is a *term* (or even a *name*) to refer to this *eschatological faith phenomenon as a whole*. We should not confuse the referent of a term with its sense. This phenomenon involves the singular coming of God’s son Christ to the world, the repeated preaching of the gospel by Christ’s missionaries, the repeated occurrences of faith in Christ and God created by the word of preaching in people living in history (believers), and the bestowal of the Spirit to them¹⁴. Note that most of these are not parts of the *sense* of the word πίστις but are *constituents of the phenomenon referred to by the term πίστις*. (How they are connected with each other is a difficult question rejecting easy answers.)

That πίστις here is a term to refer to the holistic faith phenomenon and that it involves three of the four constituents can be confirmed from Paul’s descriptions in the first chapter of Galatians (1:11-12, 13, 15-16, 23. Citation from RSV).

Gal 1:11-12 For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τὸ εὐαγγελισθὲν ὑπ’ ἐμου; see also τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ in v. 7) is not man’s gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ (δι’ ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ).

Gal 1:13 For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God (ἐδίωκον τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ) violently and tried to destroy it (ἐπόρθουν αὐτήν).

Gal 1:15-16 But when he who had set me apart before I was born ... was pleased to reveal his Son to me (ἀποκαλύψαι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐμοί), in order that I might preach

¹¹ Hans D. Betz, *Galatians*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) 176. Betz maintains that “Before Christ’s coming, faith existed only exceptionally in Abraham and in Scripture as a promise.”

¹² Ibid, 176n120.

¹³ The *pistis* in the phrase ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως in Gal 3:2 and 3:5 should also be interpreted holistically. See my “Absolute Use of ΠΙΣΤΙΣ,” 71f.

¹⁴ In “Absolute Use of ΠΙΣΤΙΣ” I failed to include the Spirit bestowed to believers in the *pistis* phenomenon. I admit that at that time I myself was unaware of the need to distinguish the sense of πίστις from its referent and that some discrepancies have resulted from this unawareness between my former and present papers.

him (ἵνα εὐαγγελίζωμαι αὐτὸν) among the Gentiles ...

Gal 1:23-24 [T]hey only heard it said, "He who once persecuted us (ὁ διώκων ἡμᾶς) is now preaching the faith (εὐαγγελίζεται τὴν πίστιν) he once tried to destroy (ἦν ποτε ἐπόρθει)." And they glorified God because of me.

First, Paul declares in Galatians 1:11-12 that "the gospel preached" by him originated from "a revelation of Jesus Christ." Whether "of Jesus Christ" is a subjective genitive or objective is difficult to determine. If it is taken in line with the affirmation in 1:1, "Paul an apostle ... through Jesus Christ and God the Father" (Παῦλος ἀπόστολος ... διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ θεοῦ πατρὸς), it may look natural to construe it subjectively as a "revelation from Jesus Christ."¹⁵ On the other hand, in the light of 1:16 which clearly states that it is God who does the revealing it could be better taken as an objective genitive (Christ is the content of the revelation). In any case, we find here an unmistakable connection between these three: the gospel of Christ, the revelation of Christ and his gospel to Paul, and Jesus Christ. As indicated above, the revealed *pistis* as an eschatological phenomenon involves the singular coming of Christ to the world. Without this no "revelation of Jesus Christ" would have occurred to Paul. For in that case there would have been neither *revelator* nor *revelatum* that could enter into a relation of faith with Paul. In other words, Paul's reception of the gospel through a "revelation of Jesus Christ" should be regarded as belonging in one and the same *pistis* phenomenon.

Secondly, simple comparisons of Galatians 1:23 with Galatians 1:13 and 1:16 tell us more about this point. According to Betz, πίστις in Galatians 1:23 (in the absolute state as in Gal 3:23 and 25) is understood as "the content of faith (*fides quae creditur*) rather than the act of believing" and this old view is inherited by other recent advocates of the "faith-in-Christ" interpretation¹⁶. Here, too, Betz and others believe that determining one or other sense of the word in context is exegetes' key question. It is inconceivable to them to search for the (external) referent of πίστις. Why should we not take the four arthrous occurrences of πίστις (Gal 1:23; 3:23, 23 and 25) by the same token? Just as in Galatians 3:23 and 25, so for Galatians 1:23, too, we should consider that πίστις refers to the eschatological phenomenon, the *Pistis* (in my terminology), involving human beings' act of believing. Paul mentions expressly and positively what the Judean believers were hearing about his conversion (if not a verbatim report). It seems that Paul thought his faith terminology to be the same as that in their report in Galatian 1:23, or even that he learned it from his predecessors¹⁷. All theories aside Paul was a late comer to this new movement. While insisting the independence of his apostleship (Gal 1:1) and gospel (Gal 1:11-12) from any human authority, Paul did not contend over teachings on faith in this letter.¹⁸ What concerned him was Galatian believer's deviation from the true gospel of Christ (Gal 1:7), and not faith.

Double parallelisms of Galatians 1:23 with Galatians 1:16 and 1:13 should be noted

¹⁵ Richard Longenecker, *Galatians*, WBC 41 (Dallas: Word, 1990) 23f.

¹⁶ Betz, *Galatians*, 81n235. Frederick F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: a Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 105; Dunn, *Galatians*, 84; Moo, *Galatians*, 114.

¹⁷ Concerning this possibility special attention should be paid to the episodes with references to "faith" in the first eleven chapters of Acts. They are likely to contain some traditions going back to the earliest days of the Jerusalem church.

¹⁸ Gal 5:6b, ἀλλὰ πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη, certainly reflects the apostle's notion of true faith, but he is not discussing any differences between spurious and true faiths here. Cf. 1 Cor 15:2, 14, 17; Matt 8:10, 15:28; Luke 7:9, 8:13, 25, 17:6; Acts 8:13; Jas 2:17, 19, 26.

carefully in this connection. De Boer explains the parallelism between Galatians 1:16 (“preaching God’s Son”) and Galatians 1:23 (“preaching the faith”) as follows:

The parallel indicates that “the faith” in 1:23 may refer to “the faith of the Son of God” (2:20) or “of [Jesus] Christ” (2:16), which would mean that Paul is using the word “faith” in 1:23 as a metonym for the Son of God or Christ, as he does in 3:23-26.... To preach “the faith” is to preach “God’s Son” or “Christ.”¹⁹

This reasoning is very questionable. The parallelism between “preaching God’s Son” (Gal 1:16) and “preaching the faith” (Gal 1:23) is not identical to one between “preaching *the faith of* God’s Son” and “preaching the faith.” Whether “the faith” in Galatians 1:23 refers to “the faith of God’s Son” cannot be determined from this parallelism. Moreover, phrases virtually identical to “preaching God’s Son” are found also in 2 Corinthians 1:19, 4:5 and Philippians 1:15, without any parallelism or other indication that dictates us to read the sense of Christ’s faith or faithfulness there. In my view, τὴν πίστιν in Galatians 1:23 is not a metonym for Christ in Paul’s idiom. On the contrary, “Christ” in Galatians 1:16 is a metonym for the *Pistis*. As with Betz’ interpretation, de Boer’s also suffers from the presupposition that determining one or another sense of πίστις is decisive in exegesis.

The parallelism seen between Galatians 1:23 and 1:13 is even more important for understanding “the *pistis*” in the absolute state. Two impressive Greek verbs found in Galatians 1:23 also appear in Galatians 1:13: One is διώκω (“to persecute”) and the other πορθέω (“to destroy”; cf. Acts 9:21). So this section is considered to be framed by 1:13 and 1:23 where this set of verbs play an important role. Paul’s wording shows that the “us” (v. 23) parallels with “the church of God” (v. 13) and “the faith” (v. 23) with “the church of God” (v. 13, literally “it” [αὐτὴν]). The former parallelism is easily understandable, while the latter urges us to ponder the reason. If “the faith” simply means “the content of faith” or “the gospel” as Betz and others maintain, how can it be parallel with “the church of God”? The latter denotes an assembly of believers! You cannot explain it away by insisting that this use of πίστις goes back to a report among “the churches of Christ in Judea” (v. 22) and therefore is not Pauline. For this is the first occurrence of πίστις, one of the most important words in this letter, and the section from 1:12 to 2:14 in which these two places belong is Paul’s *narratio* according to Betz’ analysis. Then, if this use of πίστις is to be distinguished from the other uses of the word without a modifier (in 3:2, 5, 7-9, 11-12, 14, 23-26; 5:5, 6; 6:10), Paul’s referring to his past persecution of “the faith” would have seemed out of focus in the eyes of his Galatian readers and his *narratio* would have been much less successful.

The parallelism of “the faith” with “the church of God” need not be construed based on the *senses* of the words. We should attempt a holistic interpretation by searching for the *referent* of “the faith.” Let us see what verbs are used with what objects in these verses.

Persecute	the church of God (v. 13), us (v. 23)
Try to destroy	the church of God (v. 13), the faith (v. 23)
Preach	the faith (v. 23), [the gospel (v. 8, 11), God’s Son (v. 16)]

To persecute and to try to destroy²⁰ are on the same line of action in this context, so the

¹⁹ De Boer, *Galatians*, 103.

²⁰ For the strong nuance of this verb used here see Mark A. Seifrid, *Justification by Faith: the Origin and*

contrast developed here is actually one: negative (harsh persecution) and positive (active preaching). These two sets of verbs indicate attitudes in the opposite direction to each other. Interestingly, only one object is common to the two verb sets: “the faith.” What does this mean? We should note that it comes at the *end* of the section, where Paul’s report on his previous career ends. “The faith” was once the target of Paul’s persecution (v. 13) but now it is the object of his preaching (v. 23 εὐαγγελίζεται). His report, then, has a nature of *narrating God’s victory*. The genitive modifier “of God” (τοῦ θεοῦ) in Paul’s reference to the church is highly important (see also 1 Cor 1:2; 10:32; 11:16, 22; 15:9 [διότι ἔδωξα τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ]; 2 Cor 1:1; 1 Thess 2:14; Acts 20:28). Since this “assembly of God’s people” (Dunn) was chosen by God himself (cf. 1 Thess 1:4; Rom 8:33; Col 3:12), Paul’s actions to persecute it had actually been directed against God. In spite of this, God revealed his Son to Paul (v. 16), commissioning him to preach the gospel (v. 8, 11), God’s son (v. 16), and the faith (v. 23). God has won a perfect victory, because he not only made Paul cease persecuting Christians but also changed him into a devoted preacher. Galatians 1:24 (“And they glorified God because of me.”) can be read as a report of voices among “us” to praise God’s victory.

Thus, Galatians 1:23, located at the end of the envelope structure, performs an important role in finishing Paul’s narration of God’s victory, and the word “the faith” appears in this very place. So then, how should we interpret it? Should it be construed as a synonym of the “gospel” or a metonym of “God’s son” or taken simply in the meaning of human faith? None of these are satisfactory. Since it comes at the end of the section, these meanings are all too weak to convey its summarizing force. I rather take it as an *umbrella term* to refer to *God’s economy or system for saving human beings*. This economy referred to by the word ἡ πίστις involves God the Father, Christ the Son of God, the gospel of Christ and preachers of it, and human beings who hear the gospel and come to believe, forming a church. (That the Spirit joins here cannot be known from this section.) This interpretation enables us to look closer at whether ἡ πίστις in Galatians 1:23 is identical to the same term in 3:23 and 25. I think that there is no reason not to regard them identical, the *Pistis*. While persecuting the church of God, Paul was looking at the *Pistis* from outside; at conversion he was introduced into it, now being able to preach it from inside.

II. Arguments for the Subjective Genitive

For advocates of the subjective genitive, too, the four occurrences of πίστις in Galatians 3: 23-25 pose exegetic difficulties. Here let us focus on strategies by two scholars who try to carry through their own subjective genitive interpretation: Hung-Sik Choi and De Boer.

First, Choi’s study.²¹ He correctly stresses that ἡ πίστις in Galatians 3:23-26 is the subject of “coming.” Appealing to Betz’ observation cited above (Note 11), he points out that “Paul marks the turning point in salvation history with the use of the verb ἔρχομαι.” His conclusion is that “πίστις in 3:23-25 describes an event—the coming and revelation of Christ’s faithfulness—not the Christian’s subjective act of believing.”²² This interpretation, however,

Development of a Central Pauline Theme (Leiden; New York: Brill, 1992) 155n.76.

²¹ Interestingly Choi is criticizing other advocates of the subjective genitive including Hays and R. Longenecker for their “inconsistency.” Choi, “ΠΙΣΤΙΣ in Galatians 5:5-6,” 473.

seems logically confused. If the word *describes* an event, what works is its sense that enables a description or an account of the event in question. Is the whole range of lexical senses of πίστις rich enough to give a description of “the coming and revelation of Christ’s faithfulness”? Neither the idea of the coming/revelation nor of Christ is contained in the senses of the Greek word. Maybe he wanted to say “the word refers to an event.” If so we can agree with him, but in that case another problem arises, that is, what should be counted in the event. It certainly does not come down to the revelation of Christ’s faithfulness or the coming of Christ in his faithfulness. This eschatological event can and should logically involve repeated occurrences of the Christian’s subjective act of believing and repeated missionary activities to preach the gospel, and of course God’s sending of the (Holy) Spirit. This event or phenomenon is *holistic* indeed, and therefore a holistic interpretation is required.

Choi’s theory is marked by another unremovable flaw. He takes, with many others, τὴν πίστιν in Galatians 3:23 anaphorically to mean pointing back to πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (“the faithfulness of Jesus Christ” in his interpretation) in Galatians 3:22. Then he proposes that ἡ πίστις in Galatians 3:23-26 is “an abbreviation of πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ” (cf. Gal 2:16, 22) and reads ἐκ πίστεως in Galatians 3:24 as “an abbreviation of ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ.”²³ Choi’s reasoning for the latter point is based on a rather dubious premise and his whole interpretation is controlled by it. According to Choi, Paul has a tendency to abbreviate long phrases. The evidences he puts forward are: διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Rom 3:22) to διὰ πίστεως (Rom 3:25, 31); ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ (Rom 3:26) to ἐκ πίστεως (Rom 3:30); στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου (Gal 4:3) to στοιχεῖα (Gal 4:9), and ἔργα νόμου (Rom 3:20) to ἔργα (Rom 3:27; 4:2, 6; 9:12, 32; 11:6).²⁴ These occurrences certainly deserve full consideration, but it is easily recognizable that this theory does not work in actuality. In fact, he excludes the first occurrence of πίστις in this letter (1:23) from his consideration. Moreover, if ἐκ πίστεως is an abbreviation of ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ, it is natural to think that Paul used the same phrase in a formulaic manner also in Romans. In Romans 1:17 we find two uses of the phrase ἐκ πίστεως (one of them followed by εἰς πίστιν), but in the preceding section there is no mention of ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ. Indeed, it is in 1:5 (εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίστεως) that the word πίστις appears first in this letter.

De Boer also maintains that the shorter phrase ἐκ πίστεως (3:7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 24; 5:5) is for Paul an abbreviated version of the longer one, ἐκ πίστεως (Ἰησοῦ) Χριστοῦ (Gal 2:16; 3:22).²⁵ He presents exegetic reinforcements of this view, even covering those places which are overlooked in Choi’s treatment. First, he points to the fact that the ἵνα clause in Galatians 3:24 is a parallel to that in Galatians 2:16:

3:24 ἵνα ἐκ πίστεως δικαιωθῶμεν
2:16 ἵνα δικαιωθῶμεν ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ

Then de Boer reconfirms that “the phrase *ek pisteōs* is the equivalent of *ek pisteōs Christou*.” As he points out, this parallelism is also recognized by advocates of the objective genitive, except that they take it as meaning “by faith in Christ.” So the conclusion that ἐκ πίστεως is an

²² Ibid., 477.

²³ Ibid., 467, 472-78, 482.

²⁴ Ibid., 467n2.

²⁵ De Boer, *Galatians*, 192f. He is not aware of the defection of the abbreviation theory in relation to Romans. He describes, “In Romans, as in other letters, Paul can even unambiguously call such believing in Christ *pistis*, ‘faith’ (e.g., Rom 1:5). In Galatians, however, Paul appears to use the term *pistis* consistently as shorthand for *pistis Christou*.”

abbreviation of ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ may look very sound, irrespective of how the latter is construed. However, if πίστις having no genitive word attached is an *umbrella term* to refer to God's eschatological and holistic saving economy and the genitive Χριστοῦ is an important means of differentiating that reality,²⁶ this parallelism is nothing more than a resemblance on the surface.

For de Boer what is decisive in this matter is the occurrence of πίστις in Galatians 3:23-25. He states:

[In Galatians 3:23-25] Paul uses the term in a personified way: Faith “came” onto the world stage ... (3:23, 25), as Christ himself did (3:19). As a result “we are no longer under a custodian” (3:25), “under the law” (3:23), which was “our custodian until [*eis*] Christ” (3:24), meaning “until [*eis*] Faith should be revealed” (3:23). *Pistis* seems here to be not the faith of the believer in Christ, but Christ's own *pistis*. Paul uses the word “Faith” as a metonym for Christ himself In 3:24, “to be justified on the basis of faith” then means “to be justified on the basis of Christ's faith” (cf. 2:16b). That conclusion must then also apply to 2:16.²⁷

In my view, this interpretation is logically too weak to be maintained. If “Faith” is used as a metonym for Christ himself, then, strictly speaking, what “came” onto the world stage is Christ, not Christ's own πίστις or faith. Of course this distinction is superficial from a logical point of view, because the coming of Christ is thought to be the advent of Christ with his *properties*, which certainly include his faith or faithfulness attested in his deeds. However, *relations* between two entities—Christ and believers in this case (typically the state of a person having faith in Christ)—cannot be reduced to properties of either one of them. So Christ's faith or faithfulness to God as such, however perfect it is, cannot be the “basis” on which believers are justified, *unless* it is connected with the believer in one way or other.

Can the Pauline notion of “in Christ” understood in terms of a “participationist eschatology” work in this regard?²⁸ The answer is “No.” Participation is certainly a relation and Paul's phrase “in Christ” appears many times in this letter (1:22; 2:4, 17; 3:14, 26, 28; 5:6. Cf. 2:16, 20; 3:27, 29; 5:24). However, what we are searching for in Galatians 3:23-25 is something that actualizes such a relation, a “glue,” and there is no clear mention of Christ's faith or faithfulness functioning as glue in any one of these verses. Just following this section the phrase “in Christ” reappears in 3:26: Πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. With most commentators I take ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ absolutely. So this sentence can be translated: “For through the *pistis* you are all sons of God in Christ Jesus.” It is unreasonable, however, to regard being “in Christ” as the cause of the *pistis*. Rather, the *pistis* seems to be what actualizes the relation (“in Christ” or “participation”). Since this is a recurrence of the same term in the absolute state in 3:23 and 25 and of the phrase ἐκ πίστεως in 3:24, it naturally follows that ἡ πίστις in 3:23 has something to do with such glueing. As was discussed above, the faith(fulness) of Christ itself—or perhaps even Christ *as a person*—cannot play such a role.

Interestingly, a typical objective genitive interpretation that takes ἐκ πίστεως as meaning

²⁶ Ota, “Absolute Use of ΠΙΣΤΙΣ,” 78.

²⁷ De Boer, *Galatians*, 193.

²⁸ See David L. Stubbs, “The Shape of Soteriology and the *Pistis Christou* Debate,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 61 (2008) 137-157.

“by faith in Christ” seems to be free from this problem, because, simply put, “faith in Christ” is a *binary relation*. This may be a strongpoint of the faith-in-Christ interpretation, but the question as to which is the glue remains unanswered. Besides, this interpretation does not hold good exegetically, as was shown above. We should give up scrutinizing the word πίστις for its appropriate sense in context and instead adopt a holistic perspective. Since ἡ πίστις is a term to refer to the eschatological reality as a whole, the glueing function is to be found in its components other than Christ. This question is too difficult to be dealt with here, but the Spirit seems to hold the key.

III. πίστις Χριστοῦ: Christ's Faithfulness toward Humanity

Although I understand the genitive Χριστοῦ subjectively, my view is quite different from existing subjective genitive proposals. I have been maintaining that the πίστις Χριστοῦ formulation denotes *Christ's faithfulness toward humanity* in the sense of Christ's being steadfast, truthful, and trustworthy as God's Christ. Unlike some of the subjective genitive proponents, I take Paul's expression εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν (“we came to believe in Christ Jesus”) in its full literal force as referring to Christ as the object of faith. So as far as Christ's deeds are recognized by his believers as essential for their own justification, the former are a *correlative* of their faith in Christ. In other words, for Christ's believers his deeds are not such that are done by him alone apart from the faith of human beings.

In my interpretation the genitive construction πίστις Χριστοῦ does not express “faith in Christ” itself, but denotes a *correlative of faith in Christ*, the focus of which lies, according to Paul, in the recognition that Christ is faithful toward human beings in his deeds referred to by the same phrase. In other words, πίστις Χριστοῦ denotes the *faithworth* of Christ's *specific deeds* referred to by the same phrase in the faith relation into which the believer has been brought by the grace of God. Then might we as well translate πίστις Χριστοῦ “Christ's faithworth”? No, not that way. The concept of faithworth is more fundamental and comprehensive, for whenever someone believes in Christ for anything preached about him, his or her faith is directed toward the worth Christ has as regards that preaching. πίστις Χριστοῦ or Christ's *pistis* is a rather *specific term* as will be explained from now on. I will explain in two steps: (1) a contextual comparison of the places where the phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ appears, and (2) the specific referent of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Galatians 2:16-21.

Strikingly, all the seven places having πίστις Χριστοῦ (see Note 1) come in a context discussing or at least touching on all of these: (1) righteousness or justification (Rom 3:21-26; Gal 2:15-21; Gal 3:6-22; Phil 3:5-11), (2) criticism of the law (Rom 3:21; Gal 2:16-21; Gal 3:10-14, 17-22; Phil 3:6-9), and (3) Christ's death, redemption or atonement for sins (Rom 3:24-25; Gal 2:19-21; Gal 3:13; Phil 3:10). This fact seems to indicate that Paul's usage of the πίστις Χριστοῦ construction is fundamentally linked to these three-fold references. Furthermore, criticism of the law may show that Paul used πίστις Χριστοῦ as a *polemical* term.²⁹ Giving

²⁹ Generally speaking, Christ's person and deeds are steadfast, truthful, and trustworthy (i.e., πιστός) for those who believe in him, but such a notion of πίστις (faithworth) is more comprehensive in nature than Paul's specific uses of πίστις Χριστοῦ, which should be distinguished from the former. Nevertheless, it would be of great value to see whether Paul could appeal to the *concept* of πίστις Χριστοῦ (Christ's faithfulness in relation to believers) without using the

heed to this fact, I now try to elucidate the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ in the context of Galatians 2:15-21.

In Galatians 2:15-21 particularly important for our study is Galatians 2:16 and 2:20. They can be translated as follows:

Gal 2:16 Yet knowing that a person is not justified by works of the law, if not through *pistis* of Jesus Christ [not justified], we, too, came to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by *pistis* of Christ, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

Gal 2:20 And I no longer live, but Christ lives in me; and what I now live in the flesh I live by *pistis* of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me.

In Galatians 2:15-21, πίστις Χριστοῦ is fundamentally linked to justification by God (Gal 2:16-17) and righteousness (Gal 2:21), the law's inability to justify (Gal 2:16, 21), and Christ's atoning or redemptive death (Gal 2:20-21). Now, the first thing to be noted is that *pistis* of (Jesus) Christ (Gal 2:16a, 16b) is the medium (διὰ) or origin (ἐκ) of justification, irrespective of what this genitive construction means. Advocates of the objective genitive take "through *pistis* of Jesus Christ" in the meaning of "through faith in Jesus Christ." In that case, what does "faith in Jesus Christ" refer to? Dunn explains it as "acceptance of the reliability of what was said by and about Christ (acceptance of the gospel message ...) and trust in, reliance upon the Christ of whom the gospel thus spoke."³⁰ In light of the three-fold references common to all the seven places, however, this explanation is too broad to be of use to identify the referent of πίστις Χριστοῦ.

The expression "who loved me and gave himself up for me" in Galatians 2:20b derives from a pre-Pauline Christological formula that understands "Christ's death on the cross as an act of love and self-sacrifice on behalf of the Christian."³¹ This formula is a close parallel of that found in Galatians 1:4 (τοῦ δόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν "who gave himself for our sins"), and the "for our sins" in the latter implies that Jesus' death was understood even by Paul as an expiatory self-sacrifice to deal with believers' sins. This is followed by ὅπως ἐξέλθῃ ἡμᾶς ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦ ἐνεστώτος πονηροῦ ("that he might deliver us from the present evil age"). De Boer sees Paul's intent in this series, commenting that "Paul immediately interprets Christ's giving himself 'for our sins' to effect not forgiveness but deliverance from an evil realm."³² This interpretation seems to me too simple, but what is to be questioned here is not its validity but *for whom* and *for what* Paul and others believed Christ the Son of God gave himself up. Of course, the answer is given in the text: "for me" and "for our sins." Paul and others *believed* that Christ died for the sake of human beings. According to de Boer, "'the faith of the son of God' (v. 20c) refers to the Son's own faith, in particular his faithful, atoning death on the cross."³³ Since he correctly includes "atoning" in his description, his interpretation may look quite the same as my own version: "πίστις Χριστοῦ denotes Christ's faithfulness toward humanity." What is insufficient, then, in de Boer's exegesis?

phrase in situations where these three-fold references were meaningful for him. Romans 10:8-11, for instance, seems to reflect such a situation.

³⁰ Dunn, *Galatians*, 139.

³¹ Betz, *Galatians*, 125f.

³² De Boer, *Galatians*, 30.

³³ Ibid., 162. Cf. also 175.

The problem is that he and other proponents of the subjective genitive are unaware of the fact that Paul's phrase does not so much refer to "the Son's faithful, atoning death on the cross" itself as denotes the *significance of his atoning death for believers* referred to by the same phrase. Hence, πίστις Χριστοῦ cannot mean anything other than Christ's death *in his faithfulness toward believers*. In other words, Christ's faithfulness is a correlative of Paul's and other Christians' faith in Christ in this regard; it is the *faithworth* of his specific deeds culminating in his atoning death for those who have faith in him. Furthermore, in God's economy for human salvation, the *Pistis*, the phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ denotes the binary relation between Christ and his believers established by the gospel pointing to his atoning death (see esp. 1 Cor 15:3); on the basis of this relation God justifies such people in his holistic economy.

Of course "Christ's faithfulness to God" has a faithworth when it is acknowledged as true (as in Philippians 2:4-11), but it is the faithworth of the statement or proposition that "Christ was faithful to God even unto death on a cross," not immediately that of Christ. We should note that in this case no logical link has yet been established between Christ's faithfulness and the justification of human beings. For however perfect Christ's faithfulness to God is, it is Christ's and *not* the Christian's. I do not find anything wrong with this proposition, but unless it is believed as *his faithfulness to me* in the faith relation involving me, it has no power to justify me.

Title	PISTIS IN ACTS AS BACKGROUND OF PAUL'S FAITH TERMINOLOGY
Author(s)	OTA, SHUJI
Citation	Hitotsubashi journal of arts and sciences, 56(1): 1-12
Issue Date	2015-12
Type	Departmental Bulletin Paper
Text Version	publisher
URL	http://doi.org/10.15057/27660
Right	

PISTIS IN ACTS AS BACKGROUND OF PAUL'S FAITH TERMINOLOGY

SHUJI OTA

The Greek word πίστις used in the absolute state in Galatians 1:23, 3:23-26 and other places (3:2, 5, 7-9, 11-12, 14; 5:5, 6; 6:10) is a *term* or even a *proper name* to refer to God's eschatological economy to save human beings that has now been made up in the coming and redemptive work of Jesus Christ.¹ This economy, holistic in nature, involves God the Father; Christ Jesus, the Son of God; the Holy Spirit; the gospel of Christ and preachers of it; and human beings who hear the gospel and come to believe. In view of Galatians 1:23 it is highly probable that Paul learned his faith terminology, including the name *Pistis*, from his predecessors. In this paper I will inquire into the ways πίστις, πιστεύω and πιστός are used in the Acts of the Apostles, centering on Acts 3:16, a particularly important text in connection with Paul's idiom πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ and his use of πίστις in the absolute state.

I. *Peter's Speeches in Acts*

In Galatians 1:23-24 Paul writes with a direct quotation: μόνον δὲ ἀκούοντες ἦσαν ὅτι ὁ διώκων ἡμᾶς ποτε νῦν εὐαγγελίζεται τὴν πίστιν ἣν ποτε ἐπόρθει, καὶ ἐδόξαζον ἐν ἐμοὶ τὸν θεόν (they only heard it said, "He who once persecuted us is now preaching *the faith* he once tried to destroy," and they glorified God because of me). This use of πίστις in the absolute state (τὴν πίστιν) evidently goes back to the religious vocabulary of "the churches of Judea that are in Christ" (v. 22, ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Ἰουδαίας ταῖς ἐν Χριστῷ). In my view, the Judean churches were using the noun πίστις as a *term* or *proper name* to refer to God's eschatological, holistic economy to save human beings through Jesus Christ.

It is no easy task to trace the line of πίστις tradition from Paul back to his predecessors in the primitive church(es). However, we do have Paul's verbal evidence in Galatians 1:23, which contains a key to our inquiry. We can reasonably associate this interesting use of πίστις with "the churches of Judea." Hence, it must have originated in Jerusalem, not in Antioch (Acts 11:19-26; 15:1-4; Gal 2:11), among the leaders of the Hebrews (Ἑβραῖοι. cf. Act 6:1). Soon, however, it must have been shared by the Hellenists (Ἑλληνισταί. Act 6:1; 9:29; 11:20) in Jerusalem and then in Antioch. Otherwise it would not have come down to Paul.

The first fifteen chapters of Acts contain nine speeches (in the form of addresses, sermons, or reports) delivered by Apostle Peter: (1) 1:16-22 (to his brethren at a house); (2) 2:14-36, 38-39, 40 (to the Jews and proselytes at a house in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost); (3) 3:12-26 (to the Jews at Solomon's Portico in the Jerusalem Temple); (4) 4:8-12 (to the rulers of the people and the elders before the council); (5) 4:19-20 (to the rulers of the people and the elders); (6) 5:29-32 (to the high priest before the council); (7) 10:34-43 (to Cornelius, a proselyte, and his friends at his residence in Caesarea); (8) 11:5-17 (to the apostles and the

¹ Shuji Ota, "ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ: Christ's Faithfulness to Whom?," *Hitotsubashi Journal of Arts and Sciences* 55 (2014) 15-26. Here 18-21.

fellow Jews at Jerusalem); and (9) 15:7-11 (to the apostles, elders, and other people at the Jerusalem Council). Five of the nine (Nos. 2, 3, 4, 6, 7) have the nature of a missionary speech, announcing the fundamental truths of Jesus (crucifixion, resurrection, the Holy Spirit poured out through him, authority and power, etc.) to the people outside the church. These are widely recognized to be based on the Jerusalem *kerygma* going back to the earliest days of the Jerusalem church.² We consider their contents together.

II. *πίστις of Jesus's Name*

Luke relates an impressive healing episode in Acts 3, which is followed by Peter's third speech (3:12-26). Here Peter explains what happened to "a man lame from birth" in terms of *πίστις*. Especially important for our exegesis are these three verses:

3:6 ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ Ναζωραίου [ἔγειρε καὶ] περιπατεῖ.

"In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk."

3:12 ἄνδρες Ἰσραηλῖται, τί θαυμάζετε ἐπὶ τούτῳ ἢ ἡμῖν τί ἀτενίζετε ὡς ἰδίᾳ δυνάμει ἢ εὐσεβείᾳ πεποιηκόσιν τοῦ περιπατεῖν αὐτόν;

"Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as if (at) ones who by their own power or piety had made him walk?"

3:16 καὶ ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ τοῦτον ὃν θεωρεῖτε καὶ οἶδατε, ἐστερέωσεν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἡ πίστις ἢ δι' αὐτοῦ ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ τὴν ὀλοκληρίαν ταύτην ἀπέναντι πάντων ὑμῶν.

"And because of the trustworthiness of his name, his name has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through him (or, it [= his name]) has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you."

Peter, denying outright his and John's own power or piety, emphatically ascribes the cause of the healing to Jesus's name itself. The phrase ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ in 3:16 is traditionally translated "by faith in his name" (RSV), but this interpretation is questionable. First of all, this man does not seem to have had faith in Jesus's name until he was healed (see vv. 3-6). Certainly he "entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God" (3:8-9). His joy and praise may be taken as a sign of "faith," but it occurred only *after* he was healed. It is more logical, therefore, to conclude that he had no faith in Jesus's name at first, just healing followed by his faith³. Therefore, ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ cannot reasonably be translated "by faith in his name" (compare with Mk 5:34, ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε). Furthermore, when referring to someone's faith in Jesus the author of Acts uses the preposition εἰς, *not a genitive construction*:

20:21 διαμαρτυρόμενος Ἰουδαίοις τε καὶ Ἑλλήσιν τὴν εἰς θεὸν μετάνοιαν καὶ πίστιν εἰς τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν.

"testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and *faith in our Lord Jesus*." (In Paul's speech addressed to Ephesian presbyters)

² C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), Chapter 1.

³ In Acts 3:16 no human faith is thought as the precondition of healing, just as the Holy Spirit was poured out without any faith on the side of human beings (2:4, 17-18, 33).

- 24:24 ὁ Φήλιξ ... μετεπέμψατο τὸν Παῦλον καὶ ἤκουσεν αὐτοῦ περὶ τῆς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν πίστεως.
 Felix ... sent for Paul and heard him speak concerning *faith in Christ Jesus*. (In Luke's narration)
- 26:18 τοῦ λαβεῖν αὐτοῦς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν καὶ κληρὸν ἐν τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις *πίστει τῇ εἰς ἐμέ*.
 'that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified *by faith in me*.' (In Jesus's words quoted by Paul)

It is evident from a comparison of these texts with Acts 3:16 that Luke used the two wordings quite deliberately and differently. The Greek phraseology in the opening part of Acts 3:16a might have been affected by its Aramaic original Luke used as his source, but no such material is known to us anyway. Torrey's conjecture (הַשֵּׁם דִּי אֱלֹהֵי מְרַחֵם)⁴ is of no help, because he was convinced that the *πίστις* in Luke's Greek means "faith." Whatever Aramaic word lay behind, we have to accept and interpret the Greek text as it is.

The "name of Jesus" is considered to be a metonym of Jesus Christ that embraces all that belongs to him: his identity, authority and power, and working at the right hand of God (including his messiahship, resurrection from the dead, pouring-out of the Holy Spirit, provision of human agents and missionaries, healing, exorcism, miracles, and salvation above all). This phrase is not characteristically Lucan, because τὸ ὄνομά μου ("my name") to refer to Jesus himself is found in all of the four canonical Gospels. We should maintain, therefore, that ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ was probably picked up by Luke from his source going back to the primitive church in Jerusalem. Comparisons with other texts in Acts that are connected with Peter and that refer to the "name of Jesus" are informative (see also 2:38; 9:14, 15-16, 21).

- 4:7 ἐν ποίᾳ δυνάμει ἢ ἐν ποίῳ ὀνόματι ἐποιήσατε τοῦτο ὑμεῖς;
 "By what *power* or by what *name* did you do this?"
- 4:10 ὅτι ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ Ναζωραίου ὃν ὑμεῖς ἐσταυρώσατε, ὃν ὁ θεὸς ἡγειρεν ἐκ νεκρῶν, ἐν τούτῳ οὗτος παρέστηκεν ἐνώπιον ὑμῶν ὑγιής.
 "that *by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth*, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *by it* (= his name) this man is standing before you well."
- 4:12 καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἄλλῳ οὐδενὶ ἢ σωτηρία, οὐδὲ γὰρ ὄνομά ἐστιν ἕτερον ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανὸν τὸ δεδομένον ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἐν ᾧ δεῖ σωθῆναι ἡμᾶς.
 "And *salvation* is in no one else, for there is *no other name* under heaven given among people by which we must be *saved*."
- 4:30 ἐν τῷ τὴν χειρὰ [σου] ἐκτείνειν σε εἰς ἴασιν καὶ σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα γίνεσθαι διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ ἁγίου παιδός σου Ἰησοῦ.
 "while *you stretch out* your hand for healing, and for signs and wonders to occur, *through the name of your holy servant Jesus*."
- 10:43 τούτῳ πάντες οἱ προφῆται μαρτυροῦσιν ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν λαβεῖν διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ πάντα τὸν πιστεύοντα εἰς αὐτόν.
 "Of *him* (= Jesus) all the prophets bear witness that everyone *who believes in him* receives *forgiveness of sins through his name*."

⁴ C. C. Torrey, *The Composition and Date of Acts* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1916) 16.

The “name of Jesus” is of course not identical to “Jesus,” which is a proper name. However, the juxtaposition of “him” and “his name” in Acts 3:16, 4:12, and 10:43 suggests that the “name of Jesus” refers to Jesus himself in his identity, power and working (healing, salvation, and forgiveness of sins in these case). As a metonym it functions as a *quasiprproper name* in these texts. If this observation is correct, the genitive case τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ in 3:16 can be taken subjectively and τῇ πίστει preceding it in the sense of “trustworthiness,” “truthfulness” or “faithfulness.” In short, πίστις τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ in Acts 3:16 means that *Jesus’s name is trustworthy, truthful, and even faithful for human beings*. This sense of πίστις corresponds to the usual lexical meaning of the adjective πιστός, “trustworthy, faithful, dependable, inspiring trust or faith” (Gingrich), and the construction of πίστις followed by the genitive case of a quasiprproper name seems to harmonize well with the results of George Howard’s survey to the Septuagint and the literature of Hellenistic Judaism in general.⁵

Acts 3:16 might have been translated (by Luke or others) from an Aramaic source in some form or other that is unknown to us. That translation, however, would have been done in the “Hellenistic Jewish mentality,” which finds inappropriateness “expressing the object of faith by means of the objective genitive.” In this case, however, πίστις cannot mean “faith” in the sense of believing in, or being faithfulness to, God. How can one think of Jesus’s name believing in God or being faithful to him? The whole range of this metonym has nothing to do with such an idea. To express it in simpler form, καὶ ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει αὐτοῦ, would suffice. Moreover, that Jesus is faithful to God is axiomatic for both Peter and Luke and need not be mentioned (see 2: 27; 3:13-14, 26; 4:27, 30; 13:35-37).

The meaning of this πίστις, that is, “trustworthiness,” “truthfulness” or “faithfulness,” is akin to that of the same word contained in the Pauline idiom πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Gal 2:16a, 16b, 20; 3:22; Rom 3:22, 26; Phil 3:9). As discussed previously, I believe that the genitive case in Paul’s πίστις Χριστοῦ formulation does not so much denote Christ’s own faith or faithfulness to God as *Christ’s faithfulness toward humanity* in the sense of Christ’s being steadfast, truthful, and trustworthy as God’s Christ.⁶ Let me call this “subjective interpretation B” over against the “subjective interpretation A” gaining force among scholars in the English-speaking world. In my view the subjective interpretation B is much superior in exegetic applicability to the interpretation A, though they naturally have much in common. One of the best examples showing such applicability is seen precisely in the interpretation of Acts 3:16. The “awkwardness of this sentence as it stands”⁷ can be thoroughly eliminated by the subjective interpretation B. What is even more important, this interpretation provides a bridge between Paul’s πίστις Χριστοῦ formulation and the πίστις terminology of the primitive churches witnessed in Acts. Thus it gives us a hint to probe into the whole “tradition history” of πίστις from the Jerusalem apostles down to Paul. Such a result can never be expected of the

⁵ G. Howard, “The ‘Faith of Christ,’” *Expository Times* 85 (1974) 212-215. As he writes, “it was inappropriate to the Hellenistic Jewish mentality to express the object of faith by means of the objective genitive. Though a textbook case can be made for it, in actual practice it does not appear. Characteristically the writers use the preposition when they wish to express the object” (p. 213).

⁶ Ota, “ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ,” 24f.; idem, “Absolute Use of ΠΙΣΤΙΣ and ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ in Paul” *AJBI* 23 (1997) 64-82. Here 79f. (<http://www2.rikkyo.ac.jp/web/sota/>).

⁷ F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: the Greek Text with an Introduction and Commentary*, 3rd rev. and enl. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990) 142. R. I. Pervo goes so far as to write, “the text is probably corrupt.” See his *Acts: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009) 106.

subjective interpretation A because it takes the meaning of πίστις in terms of (human) attitude to God, that is “faith” or “faithfulness.”

What Peter asserted about the healing of the lame man in Acts 3:12-16 and 4:8-12, and more generally for Jesus's name in 4:30 and 10:39-43 can be summarized: Of all the names existing in the world (those of persons with power, gods, angels, Satan, etc.) only the name of Jesus Christ, who is God's “holy servant,” is trustworthy because of his uniquely true relation with life-giving God and therefore we can be, and must be, saved only through his name. The fundamental force of the “trustworthiness of his name” lies in its worth to assure the salvation of human beings, with healing, signs and wonders accompanying sometimes. As the name of Jesus Christ is trustworthy in this sense, his name gave this man perfect health.

III. πίστις Used in the Absolute State in Acts

In Acts 3:16b, καὶ ἡ πίστις ἡ δι' αὐτοῦ ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ τὴν ὁλοκληρίαν ταύτην ἀπέναντι πάντων ὑμῶν, we find another interesting use of πίστις. This is equally important in relation to the tradition history of the New Testament πίστις and to Paul's πίστις terminology in particular. The expression ἡ πίστις ἡ δι' αὐτοῦ is by no means to be equated with ἡ πίστις αὐτοῦ. The phrase δι' αὐτοῦ (“through him”) denotes the manner in which ἡ πίστις works. Unlike the genitive case αὐτοῦ, it does not specify whose, or in whom, the faith is. As Peter declares in 4:27-30, Jesus is God's “holy servant” and his healing, signs and wonders are ultimately dependent on God's will and act (“while *you* stretch out your hand”). In other words, however Jesus's name is trustworthy in the above-mentioned sense, he cannot perform healing or salvation apart from God (cf. 10:38, ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ἦν μετ' αὐτοῦ). It is therefore reasonable to think that the πίστις in 3:16b has implications of God's authority that surpass that of Jesus. Moreover, this πίστις is used *absolutely*. Suppose a sentence lacking the second ἡ: ἡ πίστις δι' αὐτοῦ ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ τὴν ὁλοκληρίαν ταύτην ... Since this sentence makes perfect sense (“the faith has given him this perfect health through him ...”), it is evident that the article signifies nothing but the uniqueness of the working channel of the πίστις, which is Jesus or his name.

Another πίστις having implications of God's authority is found in Acts 6:7 (see also Peter's word in 15:9 with my interpretation below).

6:7 Καὶ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἡϋξάνεν καὶ ἐπληθύνετο ὁ ἀριθμὸς τῶν μαθητῶν ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ σφόδρα, πολὺς τε ὄχλος τῶν ἱερέων ὑπήκουον τῇ πίστει.

And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were *obedient to the faith*.

Firstly, this πίστις is used absolutely (cf. 13:8; 14:22, 27; 15:9; 16:5, on which see below). Secondly, linked closely by a frame structure to the “word of God” it obviously has an overtone of God's authority. But then, thirdly, the frame structure formed by ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ at the head and τῇ πίστει at the end does not necessarily mean that this πίστις is synonymous with the “word of God.” We can only conclude that it has much to do with the word of God (though it may be possible to regard the latter as a metonym of the former). Finally, by “obedient to the faith” Luke appears to have stressed that the priests listened to the preached word of God and came to believe, admitting God's authority. Theirs was far from a mere outward conversion.

Since Acts 6:7 is Luke's summary of what happened in the earliest days of Jerusalem after the Pentecost, this usage of πίστις might be thought to be his own. This is not likely, however, in light of other wordings apparently available to him. Apart from the somewhat later term "Χριστιανός" (11:26; 26:28; 1Pet 4:16), he could certainly use the verb πιστεύω (as in 13:12, 48; 14:1; 17:12, 34; 19:2) and the noun ὁδός (as in 9:2; 13:10; 16:17; 18:25, 26; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22). The wording ὑπήκουον τῇ πίστει, which is not so straightforward, should therefore be considered to go back to Luke's sources, not his own terminology.

Thus the πίστις in Acts 3:16 and 6:7 in the absolute state can be best construed as a *term* or *proper name* to refer to God's holistic economy to save human beings through Christ, which has been prepared "in the last days" (2:17). It involves as its constituents: God himself (2:17, 22-24, 32, 36, 39; 3:13, 15, 18, 26; 4:10, 24; 5:30-32; 6:7; 8:14; 10:28, 36, 38, 40-42; 11:1, 18; 12:24; 13:23, 30, 33, 37; 15:4, 8; etc.); Jesus Christ who was raised from the dead (2:24, 32; 3:15; 4:10, 33; 5:30; 10:40-41; 13:30-37; 17:18, 31; 26:23), was exalted to the right hand of God (2:33; 5:31; 7:55-56), and continues to work through his servants (2:43; 3:6-8; 4:29-30; 5:12, 15-16, 41-42; 6:8; 8:6-7, 14-17; 9:15, 40-41; 10:44; 14:8-10; 16:18; 19:6; etc.); the Holy Spirit (2:4, 33, 38; 4:8, 31; 5:32; 6:3, 5, 10; 7:55; 8:15-17, 29; 9:17, 31; 10:19, 38, 44-47; 11:15, 24; etc.); the word of God (2:14, 41; 4:4, 29, 31; 5:20; 6:2, 4, 7; 8:14, 25; 10:36, 44; 11:1, 14, 19; 12:24; 13:5, 7, 26, 44, 46, 48; 15:7; etc.); and those who believe (2:44; 4:4, 32, 34; 5:14; 6:7; 9:31, 42; 10:43, 45; 11:17, 21; etc.).

God's saving economy connected solely with the name of Jesus (2:38; 3:6, 16; 4:10, 12, 30; 10:43) certainly covers the expected resurrection of believers⁸ and the gift of the Holy Spirit given to them (esp. 2:33, 38; 8:17; 10:44-45; 11:17; 15:8; 19:6). It is Jesus who plays a central role in this economy. Yet, since all the power of healing, signs and wonders come from God, who raised Jesus from the dead, the healing of the lame man in his name (3:6-9) was actually done by God. Peter declared in Acts 3:16a that the saving economy of God called *Pistis* is connected exclusively with (the name of) Jesus, and in 3:16b that the ultimate cause of healing is not the magical effect of Jesus's name but the power of God working in this economy through him (note the preposition διὰ in 3:16b).

Apart from those texts pertaining to Peter and the Hebrews in Jerusalem, we should also interpret five other absolute uses of πίστις in Acts, four of which are connected by Luke with the ministry of Paul. If his reports have some reliability, we may count them as a link in faith terminology between Peter and Paul.

13:8 ἀνθίστατο δὲ αὐτοῖς Ἐλύμας ὁ μάγος ... ζητῶν διαστρέψαι τὸν ἀνθύπατον ἀπὸ τῆς πίστεως.

But Elymas the magician ... withstood them, seeking to *turn away* the proconsul *from the faith*.

14:22 ἐπιστηρίζοντες τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν μαθητῶν, παρακαλοῦντες ἐμμένειν τῇ πίστει καὶ ὅτι διὰ πολλῶν θλίψεων δεῖ ἡμᾶς εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ.

strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to *continue in the faith*, and (saying,) "through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."

14:27 παραγενόμενοι δὲ καὶ συναγαγόντες τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ἀνήγγελλον ὅσα ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς

⁸ See Acts 4:2, καὶ καταγγέλλειν ἐν τῷ Ἰησοῦ τὴν ἀνάστασιν τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν. Jesus is taken here as the first instance of the resurrection which is to occur to the dead generally. Cf. 24:15, 21; 26:8, 23.

μετ' αὐτῶν καὶ ὅτι ἤνοιξεν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν θύραν πίστεως.

And when they arrived, they gathered the church together and declared all that God had done with them, and how he had *opened the door of the faith* to the Gentiles.

15:9 καὶ οὐθὲν διέκρινεν μεταξὺ ἡμῶν τε καὶ αὐτῶν τῇ πίστει καθάρισας τὰς καρδίας αὐτῶν.

“and he (= God) made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts *by the faith*.”

16:5 Αἱ μὲν οὖν ἐκκλησίαι ἐστερεοῦντο τῇ πίστει καὶ ἐπερίσσευον τῷ ἀριθμῷ καθ' ἡμέραν.

So the churches were strengthened *by the faith* and increased in number daily.

The meaning of πίστις in these texts is somewhat ambiguous. However, if we take it as a name referring to God's saving economy, then we can make more sense of these texts. By prohibiting the proconsul Sergius Paulus from hearing the word of God, Elymas tried to hinder his joining this economy (13:7, 8, 12). But the proconsul, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord (ἐπὶ τῇ διδασκίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου), believed and joined it (v. 12; for the use of this ἐπίστευσεν see below). Note that “the straight paths of the Lord” (τὰς ὁδοὺς [τοῦ] κυρίου τὰς εὐθείας) in Paul's reproach (13:10) correspond to τῆς πίστεως in 13:8. Although Elymas's attempt cannot be compared with Paul's persecution stemming from “zeal” (Gal 1:13; Phil 3:6), he rebelled, like Paul, against God's will to save people by this economy.⁹ To “continue in the faith” in Acts 14:22 also demands a similar interpretation. This expression does not so much mean continuing to have faith as abiding in God's saving economy through faith. According to this text, the Christians certainly live within this economy, seeking to enter the kingdom of God even through many tribulations. The expression “open the door of the faith” (14:27) does not exactly correspond to Paul's metaphor (1 Cor 16:9; 2 Cor 2:12; Col 4:3)¹⁰. Here Luke says that God has now made his saving economy accessible to the Gentiles, not that he has opened a way for Paul's missionary work.

The πίστις in 15:9 and 16:5 should also be taken in the sense of God's saving economy. Human faith as such cannot have any power of cleansing or strengthening. It is God working, in the name of Christ, through the Spirit that cleanses the hearts of the believers and strengthens the church. In such cases the believers would have a strong awareness of their own faith, but they would also notice that it is not their faith but God that brought out the results. It is only natural that God's saving economy is accompanied by such an awareness because it is so holistic as to involve human faith.

IV. *Participationist Use of πιστεύω in Acts*

In addition to the noun πίστις, some uses of the verb πιστεύω in this book should also be considered. Here let me concentrate on the “participationist” uses of πιστεύω in the finite form, in the form of infinitive, and of the adverbial participle¹¹.

⁹ For the meaning of Paul's persecution of the *Pistis* see Ota, “ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ,” 18f.

¹⁰ Pace Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 327.

¹¹ All the uses listed here except for those in 4:4; 8:13 and 15:7 are connected with Paul's mission.

4:4 πολλοὶ δὲ τῶν ἀκουσάντων τὸν λόγον *ἐπίστευσαν* καὶ ἐγενήθη [ὁ] ἀριθμὸς τῶν ἀνδρῶν [ὡς] χιλιάδες πέντε.

But many of those who heard the word *believed*; and the number of the men came to about five thousand.

8:13 ὁ δὲ Σίμων καὶ αὐτὸς *ἐπίστευσεν* καὶ βαπτισθεὶς ἦν προσκαρτερῶν τῷ Φιλίππῳ.

Even Simon himself *believed*, and after being baptized he continued with Philip.

13:12 τότε ἰδὼν ὁ ἀνθύπατος τὸ γεγονός *ἐπίστευσεν* ἐκπλησσύμενος ἐπὶ τῇ διδαχῇ τοῦ κυρίου.

Then the proconsul, looking at what had occurred, *believed*, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

13:48 Ἀκούοντα δὲ τὰ ἔθνη ἔχαιρον καὶ ἐδόξαζον τὸν λόγον τοῦ κυρίου καὶ *ἐπίστευσαν* ὅσοι ἦσαν τεταγμένοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of God; and as many as had been appointed for eternal life *believed*.

14:1 Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν Ἰκονίῳ κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ εἰσελθεῖν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν τῶν Ἰουδαίων καὶ λαλῆσαι οὕτως ὥστε *πιστεῦσαι* Ἰουδαίων τε καὶ Ἑλλήνων πολὺ πλῆθος.

Now at Iconium they entered together into the Jewish synagogue, and so spoke that a great multitude *believed*, both of Jews and of Greeks.

15:7 ἀναστὰς Πέτρος εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς· ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, ὑμεῖς ἐπίστασθε ὅτι ἀφ' ἡμερῶν ἀρχαίων ἐν ὑμῖν ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεὸς διὰ τοῦ στόματός μου ἀκοῦσαι τὰ ἔθνη τὸν λόγον τοῦ εὐαγγελίου καὶ *πιστεῦσαι*.

Peter stood up and said to them, "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and *believe*."

17:12 πολλοὶ μὲν οὖν ἐξ αὐτῶν *ἐπίστευσαν* καὶ τῶν Ἑλληνίδων γυναικῶν τῶν εὐσχημόνων καὶ ἀνδρῶν οὐκ ὀλίγοι.

As a result many of them *believed*, with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men.

17:34 τινὲς δὲ ἄνδρες κολληθέντες αὐτῷ *ἐπίστευσαν*, ἐν οἷς καὶ Διονύσιος ὁ Ἀρεοπαγίτης καὶ γυνὴ ὀνόματι Δάμαρις καὶ ἕτεροι σὺν αὐτοῖς.

But some men joined him and *believed*, among them Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.

19:2 εἶπέν τε πρὸς αὐτούς· εἰ πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐλάβετε *πιστεύσαντες*;

And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit *when you believed*?"

These texts, with *πιστεύω* used without any complement, are silent on the object of believing; what exactly the person(s) concerned believed or should believe is vague. The same is true of the absolute uses of the participle as substantive, which include:

2: 44 (οἱ πιστεύοντες); 4: 32 (τῶν πιστευσάντων); 11: 21 (ὁ πιστεύσας)¹²; 13: 39 (ὁ πιστεύων); 15: 5 (τινες τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς αἰρέσεως ... πεπιστευκότες); 18: 27 (τοῖς πεπιστευκόσιν)¹³; 19: 18 (Πολλοὶ τε τῶν πεπιστευκότων); 21: 20 (τῶν πεπιστευκότων), 25

¹² That they turned to the Lord (*ἐπέστρεψεν ἐπὶ τὸν κύριον*) is by no means a step after their believing. When they believed, they did turn to the Lord.

(περὶ τῶν πεπιστευκότων ἔθνων);

How should we consider these sorts of wordings? Should we supply an appropriate object in each case? Certainly, the other uses of πιστεύω in Acts seem to support such a recipe. Apart from the texts enumerated above, πιστεύω is used with a complement of some sort or another in five ways, either in the finite form or in the form of participle.

- (1) With a noun phrase¹⁴ in the dative case: 5:14 (“the Lord”)¹⁵; 8:12 (“Philip”); 16:34 (“God”); 18:8 (“the Lord”); 24:14 (“everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the Prophets”); 26:27 (“the prophets”); 27:25 (“God”).
- (2) With the preposition ἐπὶ followed by a noun phrase or pronoun in the accusative case: 9:42 (“the Lord”); 11:17 (“the Lord Jesus Christ”); 16:31 (“the Lord Jesus”); 22:19 (“you” = Jesus)
- (3) With the preposition εἰς followed by a noun phrase or (relative) pronoun in the accusative case: 10:43 (“him” = Jesus); 14:23 (“whom” = the Lord); 19:4 (“Jesus”).
- (4) With a relative pronoun in the accusative case: 13:41 (“which” = deed)
- (5) With an infinitive clause: 15:11 (“that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus”).

In light of these data it might seem reasonable to supply some appropriate complement for the instances of πιστεύω used singly. However, since there are five ways in which πιστεύω is used with a dative or accusative object, as shown above, which of them is really suitable cannot be declared so easily. Even if the context is clear, it would be almost impossible to supply the best complement uniquely. Moreover, we should ponder whether such a way of reading is really suitable for this book or whether it was expected by the author.

I guess that the absence of complements in these sentences is intentional, demanding a way of reading that radically differs from supplying an object. If this absence is not an omission, a different semantic acquisition should be expected for these uses of πιστεύω. I believe they correspond to the absolute use of the noun πίστις, which is a name to refer to God’s saving economy, the *Pistis*, as mentioned above. The absolute use of πιστεύω, then, is likely to mean joining or participating in this economy, or rather being put in it by God. Needless to say, the proconsul’s conversion was accompanied by a change in his mentality (13:12). He certainly came to believe the “teaching of the Lord.” However, it is only the subjective side of the phenomenon. More fundamentally, by believing he joined God’s saving economy or being put in it by God. Obviously the uses of πιστεύω in this manner presuppose the meaning of πίστις which refers to this economy.

If we recognize this participationist use of πιστεύω we can grasp what the texts listed above say more accurately. For example, Acts 13:48 (καὶ ἐπίστευσαν ὅσοι ἦσαν τεταγμένοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον) can be paraphrased: “And as many as had been appointed for eternal life joined the *Pistis*, that is, God’s saving economy (by believing the word of the Lord).” NRSV’s translation of this verb, “became believers,” indicates accurately, and yet ambiguously, the

¹³ The prepositional phrase διὰ τῆς χάριτος in this sentence should be construed with συνεβάλετο. See Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 404.

¹⁴ Here a noun with a definite article is regarded as a noun phrase.

¹⁵ For the connection of τῷ κυρίῳ with πιστεύοντες rather than with προσετίθεντο, see Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 168.

nuance of the original Greek. Becoming a believer means joining this economy through believing. (Of course joining does not mean any perfection. Cf. 8:13; 14:22). Another interesting example is Acts 13:38-39. By reading it from a participationist point of view we can grasp the exact content of the text.

13:38f. γνωστὸν οὖν ἔστω ὑμῖν, ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, ὅτι διὰ τούτου ὑμῖν ἄφεσις ἁμαρτιῶν καταγγέλλεται, [καὶ] ἀπὸ πάντων ὧν οὐκ ἠδυνήθητε ἐν νόμῳ Μωϋσέως δικαιωθῆναι, ἐν τούτῳ πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων δικαιοῦται.

Let it be known to you therefore, brethren, that *through this man* (= Jesus) forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and (that) *in him* everyone *who believes* is justified from all things from which you could not be justified *in the Law of Moses*.

The verb δικαιῶ, appearing twice in this sentence, is to be linked with the preposition ἀπό, but it need not be translated “freed from” as in some versions (RSV, NRSV, ESV, NASB).¹⁶ Even if it is taken in its usual sense, “justify,” this sentence makes perfect sense.

Maintaining the participationist meaning of the participle πιστεύων (that is, to join God’s saving economy), we should pay due attention to the subtle overtones of the three prepositional phrases in this sentence. “*Through this man* forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you.” This means that since Jesus is the sole agent of God who forgives sins in this holistic economy (2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 10:43; 22:16; 26:18), forgiveness of sins is proclaimed through him.¹⁷ “And *in him* everyone *who believes* is justified from all things from which you could not be justified *in the Law of Moses*.” The “Law of Moses” here does not so much refer to the Pentateuch itself or its body of regulations as to the traditional dispensation provided through Moses for Israel (note “in”). The “all things from which you could not be justified” possibly concerns the means of expiation set forth in the Law of Moses including sin offerings. It is obvious that “in him” is to be detached from “everyone who believes” (πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων). This expression indicates the believer’s relation with Jesus within the holistic economy that involves God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the word of God, and those who believe. It probably shows that Christian believers are bracketed under his name (2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5; 22:16) as the forgiven or justified people of Jesus who is their Lord, the Messiah, and the Savior (cf. 2:36; 4:33; 5:31, etc.). It is a different question, however, whether it has the same meaning as Apostle Paul’s phrase “in Christ” in his letters.

Paul, even in Luke’s narrative, seems to be a criticizer of the Mosaic Law, unlike the other leaders including Stephen (cf. 7:38). They certainly recognized the decisive nature of the new economy, but did not go so far as to criticize it. If this text preserves some of Apostle Paul’s notion of the Law, we may infer that despite his learning, from his predecessors, of the term πίστις with its especially Christian meaning, he understood it somewhat differently. It seems that he considered the value of the new economy to surpass that of the traditional dispensation beyond all comparison.

¹⁶ This connection should be distinguished from the construction in Romans 6:7, ὁ γὰρ ἀποθανὼν δεδικαίωται ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας. See Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 311f.

¹⁷ It would be natural to think the “through him” is substantially identical to “in his name.”

V. *Participationist Uses of the Adjective πιστός*

Two uses of the adjective πιστός without any complement in this book can also be construed from a participationist point of view. Since, according to this interpretation, the meaning of the adjective in each case consists in belonging to God's saving economy, it must be distinguished from those of εὐλαβής ("devout." 2:5; 8:2; 22:12), εὐσεβής ("pious." 10:2. 7 [cf. 3:12]) and δεισιδαίμων ("religious." 17:22), which merely denote the religious or spiritual disposition of the person in question in general terms, i.e., without any reference to what he or she believes.

10:45 καὶ ἐξέστησαν οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς πιστοὶ ὅσοι συνῆλθαν τῷ Πέτρῳ, ὅτι καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ ἔθνη ἡ δωρεὰ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐκκέχυται.

And the *believers* from among the circumcised who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles.

16:1 καὶ ἰδοὺ μαθητῆς τις ἦν ἐκεῖ ὀνόματι Τιμόθεος, υἱὸς γυναικὸς Ἰουδαίας πιστῆς, πατρὸς δὲ Ἑλλήνος,

And, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a *believer*, but his father was a Greek.

The πιστοὶ (used substantively) in 10:45 means not only that they are believers but also that they have joined God's saving economy by their believing. The same is true with πιστῆς in 16:1. In contrast to this, πιστὴν in 16:15, which is to be construed with the following τῷ κυρίῳ (εἰ κεκρίκατέ με πιστὴν τῷ κυρίῳ εἶναι ... "If you have judged me to be *faithful to the Lord* [or to be a *believer in the Lord*] ..."), is not participationist. Rather, it denotes her relation with the Lord established in the holistic saving economy into which she has been led. The usage of πιστός in 10:45 and 16:1 apparently corresponds to the absolute uses of πιστεύω as substantive participles, and above all to those of the present perfect participle (15:5; 18:27; 19:18; 21:20, 25)

VI. *The Meaning of πίστις in Acts 6:5*

Finally let me discuss an interesting use of πίστις that differs from any use of the noun mentioned above.

In Acts 6:5 Luke reports that the Hellenists (οἱ Ἑλληνισταὶ) chose "Stephen, a man full of *faith and the Holy Spirit*" (Στέφανον, ἄνδρα πλήρης πίστεως καὶ πνεύματος ἁγίου) as one of their seven leaders. What does this πίστις mean exactly? It need not be denied that it has an implication of "his faith in Christ,"¹⁸ but whether it is the core meaning of the word here is doubtful. Decisive for our interpretation is the context in which it appears. Luke makes special mention of the spiritual excellence of Stephen and the other leaders: "seven men of good repute, full of *the Spirit* and of *wisdom*" (6:3, μαρτυρουμένους ἐπτά, πλήρεις πνεύματος καὶ σοφίας); "And Stephen, full of grace and power, did *great wonders and signs* among the people" (6:8, Στέφανος δὲ πλήρης χάριτος καὶ δυνάμεως ἐποίει τέρατα καὶ σημεῖα μεγάλα ἐν τῷ

¹⁸ Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 183.

λαῶ); “But they could not withstand *the wisdom* and *the Spirit* with which he (= Stephen) spoke” (6:10, καὶ οὐκ ἴσχυον ἀντιστῆναι τῇ σοφίᾳ καὶ τῷ πνεύματι ᾧ ἐλάλει).

Although there is no explicit mention of the Holy Spirit in 6:8, it is obvious that the “great wonders and signs” that were done by Stephen came from the Spirit (cf. 1:8; 6:5; 10:38)¹⁹. We should note that exactly in this context the word πίστις appears. This fact leads us to ponder the possibility that its meaning is akin to that of “faith” counted by Paul as one of the spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12. Indeed, three of the gifts listed by Paul also appear in Luke’s description in Acts 6:3-10.

	σοφία	πίστις	δύναμις
Acts	6:3, 10 (wisdom)	6:5 (faith)	6:8 (power)
1 Cor	12:8 (word of wisdom)	12:9 (faith); 13:2 (all faith, so as to remove mountains)	12:10 (working of powers), 28 (deeds of power), 29 (deeds of power)

In my view this affinity cannot be explained as a mere accidental coincidence. It is likely that both Luke and Paul referred, from their respective standpoints, to spiritual gifts enjoyed by the people of the earliest churches. The πίστις in Acts 6:5, then, should be understood within the same meaning as that of the same word in 1 Corinthians 12:9 and 13:2, that is, “wonder-working faith.”²⁰

This “faith” of Stephen appears to be a special kind of spiritual gift to be made full use of in God’s saving economy, that is the *Faith*. Given this spiritual gift abundantly (πλήρης πίστεως καὶ πνεύματος ἁγίου), Stephen “did great wonders and signs among the people” (6:8). If so, it denotes his role in the holistic economy rather than his personal spirituality (“faith in Jesus Christ”). If he did not belong to the *Faith*, he would not have been called a “man full of faith.”

There are strong resemblances seen between the uses of πίστις in Acts (3:16; 6:7; 13:8, etc.) and those in Galatians (1:23; 3:23-25). This fact can be best explained by the theory that πίστις in the absolute state in these texts is used as one and the same *term* or *name* to refer to God’s saving economy and that Paul learned its meaning and usage from his predecessors.

¹⁹ In Acts 11:24 Barnabas is introduced with the expression πλήρης πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ πίστεως (note the change in word order). Despite the absence of any explicit report of Barnabas’ wonder-working in Acts, we may be allowed to guess that he also did some sort of wonders (cf. 14:11-12).

²⁰ A. Robertson and A. Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, ICC (New York: Scribner’s, 1911) 266, 290. Cf. Matt 17:20; 21:21. More specifically, Paul’s parallel wordings in 12:8-9 urge us to understand it in association with “gifts of healing.” See also R. F. Collins and D. J. Harrington, *First Corinthians*, SP (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 1999) 454; A. C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGCT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 947. The “corporate dimension” of this gift (Thiselton) is also seen in Luke’s report.

Title	THE HOLISTIC PISTIS AND ABRAHAM'S FAITH (GALATIANS 3)
Author(s)	OTA, SHUJI
Citation	Hitotsubashi journal of arts and sciences, 57(1): 1-12
Issue Date	2016-12
Type	Departmental Bulletin Paper
Text Version	publisher
URL	http://doi.org/10.15057/28246
Right	

THE HOLISTIC *PISTIS* AND ABRAHAM'S FAITH (GALATIANS 3)

SHUJI OTA

Paul the Apostle inherited his faith terminology from his predecessors and set it forward from his own perspective. In the final analysis, he derived from the Hebrews (Εβραῖοι) in the earliest Jerusalem church two fundamental ideas.¹ (1) The first is the Greek word πίστις used technically in the absolute state (Acts 3:16; 6:7; Gal 1:23; 3:2, 5, 7-9, 11-12, 14, 23-26; 5:5, 6; 6:10; Rom 1:5, 17; 3:25, 27-31; etc.). It had become a term or name to refer to God's eschatological economy to save human beings that has now been developed in the coming and redemptive work of Jesus Christ. This economy involves God himself, his Son Christ Jesus, Christ's gospel preached by his missionaries, believers living in history or the repeated occurrences of faith in Christ and God created by the word of the gospel in them, and the Spirit bestowed on them. (2) The other is the notion of the faithfulness of Christ's name (Acts 3:16), which led to the Pauline idiom πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ and others in similar forms (Rom 3:22, 26; Gal 2:16, 16, 20; 3:22; Phil 3:9). It means the *faithfulness of Jesus Christ toward humanity* in the sense of his being steadfast, truthful, and trustworthy as God's Christ. Since this economy of God takes the form of a holistic eschatological faith phenomenon, we are required to grasp the meanings of the noun πίστις, the verb πιστεύω, the adjective πιστός, and the idiom πίστις Χριστοῦ, which are used in various forms in his letters, from a holistic perspective. The aim of this paper, which is a sequel to my previous essays,² is to shed light on the foundational nature of Abraham's faith discussed in Chapter 3 of Galatians, thereby making a case for the value of a holistic understanding of the Pauline pistis.

I. *Paul's Purpose in Galatians 3*

In Galatians 1:23, Paul employs the term πίστις from the religious vocabulary of "the churches of Judea that are in Christ" (v. 22). The term is used in the absolute state as a *name*

¹ Shuji Ota, "Pistis in Acts as Background of Paul's Faith Terminology," *Hitotsubashi Journal of Arts and Sciences* 56 (2015) 1-12. The genitive case in the πίστις Χριστοῦ formulation has recently been construed as "Christ's own faith or faithfulness to God" by an increasing number of scholars in the English-speaking world. Their theories ("subjective interpretation A" in my term) differ from mine ("subjective interpretation B"), which can be applied even to such a difficult verse as Acts 3:16. My version may be classified as a so-called "third view" in the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate, but it differs from any previous attempt to "move beyond the subjective-objective dichotomy" by one interpretation or another of the Greek genitive itself. Rather, I maintain both that the πίστις in the absolute state (typically in Gal 1:23; 3:23-26) has an "eschatological-event" nature, and that the genitive case in question is beyond doubt "subjective" (the *faithfulness of Jesus Christ toward humanity*). For the "third view," see Benjamin Schliesser, "'Christ-Faith' as an Eschatological Event (Galatians 3.23-26): A 'Third View' on Πίστις Χριστοῦ," *JSNT* 38 (2016) 277-300; and Preston Sprinkle, "Πίστις Χριστοῦ as an Eschatological Event," in Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle (eds.), *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010) 165-84.

² Shuji Ota, "Absolute Use of ΠΙΣΤΙΣ and ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ in Paul," *AJBI* 23 (1997) 64-82; "ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ: Christ's Faithfulness to Whom?," *Hitotsubashi Journal of Arts and Sciences* 55 (2014) 15-26; and "Pistis in Acts as Background of Paul's Faith Terminology."

to refer to God's eschatological economy to save human beings through Jesus Christ, the *Pistis*. This terminology originated from the preaching activities, in the earliest days of the Jerusalem church, of the Hebrews led by Peter and the other Apostles, and shortly thereafter it was copied by the leaders of the Hellenists (Act 6:1ff.). Inheriting this term with its initial meaning and usage, Paul uses it to explain the fundamentals of the gospel to his readers in the Galatian churches (Gal 1:2).

Paul's direct quotation of a report among the Judean churches on Paul's conversion (Gal 1:23) is certainly purposeful in his discussions in this letter. Quoting the term πίστις to refer to God's eschatological saving economy, Paul lays the foundations for explaining the "truth of the gospel" (Gal 2:5, 14), that is, the truth that "those [who are] of the *Pistis*, these are the sons of Abraham" (3:7, οἱ ἐκ πίστεως, οὗτοι υἱοὶ εἰσὶν Ἀβραάμ. See also 3:8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 24, 26; 5:5). The instances of πίστις in these verses cannot be taken as meaning "human faith" or "Christ's faith." Paul uses the term as having the same meaning as that in Galatians 1:23. The Greek proposition ἐκ denotes origin, without any connotation of separation in this case. So we can paraphrase Galatians 3:7 thus: "Those who have their origin of life in God's saving economy, the *Pistis*, are the children of Abraham." Needless to say, such people have faith in God and Jesus Christ, but personal faith in the sense of "believing" is not the primary meaning of the Pauline phrase ἐκ πίστεως (*contra* the NRSV). Rather, it has holistic force; those who believe by hearing the gospel message have indeed joined God's saving economy.

In Galatians 3:2, Paul enters into a full discussion using the term πίστις in the absolute state that was introduced in 1:23. What is his purpose in mentioning Abraham's faith and justification in Galatians 3:6? If it were a mere comparison of Christians' justification by faith with Abraham's justification, or the drawing of an analogy between these two cases, he would not have felt any need to go on to address Abraham's "seed" (3:16). If this were his purpose, the section from 3:15 to 20 would be an insignificant aside. Since, however, this pericope contains, besides "seed," such important words as "promise[s]" (vv. 16-19) and "covenant" (v. 17; cf. 4:24), it cannot be explained away as a mere aside. We should try to elucidate Paul's purpose in this whole chapter paying due attention to Galatians 3:15-20. A holistic understanding of the *Pistis* as mentioned above gives us a sound answer in this regard. What occupied Paul's mind was how to make his readers understand that God's eschatological saving economy, the *Pistis*, has its *origin in Abraham*, in other words, how God laid the foundations of this system in electing, calling, and giving promises to Abraham, who, believing God, entered and remained in a relationship of faith with God.

II. *Christ's Atonement and Redemption*

For God's eschatological saving economy to come to fruition, it is necessary that God himself acts on his own initiative. Paul states in Galatians 4:4 as follows: "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law" (ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός, γενόμενον ὑπὸ νόμον). This Son of God is none other than "the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to set us free from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father" (Gal 1:3-4, κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ δόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν, ὅπως ἐξέλῃται ἡμᾶς ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦ ἐνεστώτος πονηροῦ κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ

πατρός ἡμῶν).

Note that the subject of this latter sentence is not “God” but “the Lord Jesus Christ.” It is Christ who “gave himself for our sins.” Certainly, he acted “according to the will of God,” in perfect obedience to his will. We may even assume this to be his faithfulness or faith to God. This sentence, however, has “Christ” as its subject, as in Galatians 2:20 (cf. Gal 3:13; 1 Cor 15:3). In Galatians 2:20, Paul states that “it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by *the faithfulness of the Son of God*, who loved me and gave himself up for me” (ζῶ δὲ οὐκέτι ἐγώ, ζῆ δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ Χριστός· ὁ δὲ νῦν ζῶ ἐν σαρκί, ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῇ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντός με καὶ παραδόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ). He also states in Galatians 3:13a that “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us” (Χριστὸς ἡμᾶς ἐξηγόρασεν ἐκ τῆς κατάρας τοῦ νόμου γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατάρα). His “becoming a curse for us” obviously denotes his death on the cross (Gal 3:13b; Deut 21:23; 27:26). We should note the expressions “for our sins,” “for me,” and “for us” in these three verses. In spite of slight differences in nuance, all of them denote the atoning or redemptive death of Christ himself.

I interpret Galatians 2:20, one of the seven occurrences of the *πίστις* Χριστοῦ formulation in Paul, from the standpoint of “subjective interpretation B” (see *supra* note 1). The phrase *πίστις* τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ does not mean “[my] faith in the Son of God” nor “the faith(fulness) of the Son of God to the Father,” but “the faithfulness of the Son of God *toward humanity*” in the sense of Christ’s being steadfast, truthful, and trustworthy as God’s Christ. We should pay careful attention to the wording “who loved me and gave himself up for me.” Because it refers to Christ’s own deed stemming from his love *for me*, not exactly for God, it is unlikely that ἐν πίστει τῇ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ means “by the faith(fulness) of the Son of God to the Father.”

This *πίστις* undoubtedly points to Christ’s death on the cross (Gal 2:21; 3:13b).³ Objectively, it is nothing more than the tragic or pitiful death of a man named Jesus, but for Paul and other believers, who had faith in him, it was his self-giving, atoning death stemming from love “for their sins to set them free from the present evil age.” This means that when Paul refers to the death of Christ using the phrase *πίστις* Χριστοῦ, what he means is not the objective fact of his death on the cross nor his deed seen as faithfulness to God, but the *faithworth*, for believers, of Christ’s death referred to using the same phrase in this context. Having faith in Christ within the economy of the *Pistis*, into which he is brought by the grace of God, Paul sees the deeds of Christ culminating in his death as totally trustworthy and truthful. Note the framing structure created by Galatians 2:16 (the faithfulness of Jesus Christ) and 2:20 (the faithfulness of the Son of God). So the Pauline phrase *πίστις* Χριστοῦ, which literally means “Christ’s faithfulness,” denotes the *faithworth* of his specific deeds—especially his death on the cross—for believers; it is a *correlative of faith in Christ* particularly in terms of his death.

God’s task of creating an eschatological economy to save human beings from “the present evil age” (Gal 1:4), the *Pistis*, was accomplished by a series of decisive actions taken by both God and Christ. When the “fullness of time had come, God sent his Son” Christ, “born of a woman, born under the law” (Gal 4:4); Christ “gave himself for our sins,” thus effecting atonement and redemption for believers (Gal 1:4; 2:20; 3:13a; 4:5); God “raised him up from

³ Martinus C. de Boer, *Galatians: A Commentary* (NTL. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2011) 150, 192, 193, 239, etc.

the dead" (Gal 1:1); God and/or Christ sent Paul and other missionaries to preach the gospel of Christ (Gal 1:1, 7-9, 11-12; 2:2, 7; 4:13); and now God bestows the Spirit on those who hear and believe within the *Pistis* (Gal 3:2, 3, 5, 14; 4:6; 5:5, 16-18, 25; 6:8). This is an outline of how God's economy of salvation was created. It thus involves God and his Son Christ, the word of the gospel preached by Christ's missionaries, human persons who hear and believe, and the Spirit.

III. *Meaning of ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως in Galatians 3:2 and 5*

The absolute use of πίστις introduced in Galatians 1:23 reappears in 3:2 and 5. We must not mistake its absence in Chapter 2. In fact, it is not that Paul moved away from this idea; rather, to explain the structure of God's saving economy now revealed (3:23, ἀποκαλυφθῆναι), he focuses on its central element, that is, Jesus Christ and his redemptive deed (the "faithfulness of Christ," Gal 2:16, 16, 20). In addition, he does refer to faith or believing on the part of human persons (Gal 2:16, "we also came to believe in Christ Jesus" καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεῦσαμεν), because faith in Christ is essential for anyone to enter this system. Following these explanations, Paul can now, in Galatians 3, address another important subject: the origin of the *Pistis*. His point is that God laid the foundations of the eschatological saving economy in electing, calling, and giving promises to Abraham, who, on his part, "believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness" (Gal 3:6; Gen 15:6).

The phrase ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως in Galatians 3:2 and 5 needs to be interpreted in connection with the quotation of Genesis 15:6 in Galatians 3:16. Since the πίστις in Galatians 3:2 and 5 means God's saving economy as a whole, understanding it solely in the sense of "human faith" or "Christ's faith(fulness)" is out of question. The Greek word ἀκοή here can mean "what is heard" in the sense of "the message" or "(the act of) hearing." In Galatians 3:1, Paul implies his previous preaching of the gospel to the Galatian people: "Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was publicly exhibited as crucified" (οἷς κατ' ὀφθαλμοὺς Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς προεγράφη ἐσταυρωμένος). His aim in using visual imagery seems to be to emphasize the mind-shaking power of Christ's gospel that was so strong as to create an image of the crucified Christ in the minds of its recipients. In any case, it is obvious that the Galatian people *heard* the gospel preached and *believed* in Jesus Christ (cf. Gal 2:16). Hence, considerations based on any sharp dichotomy between "what is heard" and "hearing" are not convincing. The text of Genesis 12:6 quoted in Galatians 3:16 also warns that such a dichotomy does not work. When and before Abraham "believed God," he certainly heard the word of God who spoke and gave promises to him (Gen 12:1-3; 15:1, "the word of the Lord" [ῥῆμα κυρίου], 15:4, "the voice of the Lord" [φωνὴ κυρίου]).

Douglas Moo argues that there is little in the context to suggest that the gospel creates faith,⁴ but his view is affected, like those of many others, by the presupposition that the πίστις in Galatians 3:2 and 5 means human faith. From a holistic standpoint, the phrase ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως can be translated as: "from the message heard of the *Pistis*."⁵ God's saving economy,

⁴ Douglas J. Moo, *Galatians* (BECNT. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2013) 183.

⁵ In Romans 10:16-17, Paul states: "But not all have obeyed the gospel; for Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed our message?' So the *Pistis* [is] by means of what is heard, and what is heard through the word of Christ" (Ἀλλ' οὐ πάντες

the *Pistis*, uses the gospel message or the preached word of God as its own instrument to move human beings.

IV. *Abraham's Faith and the Pistis*

In Galatians 3:2, Paul asks: "Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or from the message heard of the *Pistis*?" (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου τὸ πνεῦμα ἐλάβετε ἢ ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως;). Needless to say, he expects them to answer: "We received the Spirit from the message heard of the *Pistis*." In Galatians 3:5, Paul poses a similar question using the same phrases: "Well then, does the one [i.e., God] who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you [do so] by the works of the law, or from the message heard of the *Pistis*?" (ὁ οὖν ἐπιχορηγῶν ὑμῖν τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἐνεργῶν δυνάμεις ἐν ὑμῖν, ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἢ ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως;). To this, the expected answer is "the one who provides us with the Spirit and works miracles among us does so from the message heard of the *Pistis*."

Whether Galatians 3:6 should be connected to verses 1-5 or to what follows is an apparently difficult question to determine. Although the introductory *καθώς* at the beginning of 3:6 can be assumed to be an abbreviation of *καθώς γέγραπται* ("as it is written"; so Matt 26:24; Mark 1:2; Luke 2:23; Acts 15:15; Rom 1:17; 2:24; 3:10; 4:17; 8:36; *passim*), it would be more appropriate to read the word in its usual comparative sense ("just as") and view it as linked to the preceding section.⁶ If these interpretations are correct, we can paraphrase Galatians 3:6, with some information supplemented from the verses preceding it:

(A) *We* received the Spirit from the message heard of the *Pistis*, and (B) *God* provides us with the Spirit and works miracles among us from the message heard of the *Pistis*, (C) just as *Abraham* "believed *God*, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness."

As this paraphrase shows, Paul does not simply work using an analogy between the Galatian believers' faith and the faith of Abraham. Rather, he argues on the basis of an *analogy of God's economy of salvation*. Even Abraham's "justification by faith" occurred within a certain salvific system, which is similar or even identical to the eschatological economy now accomplished by the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. God's economy prepared for Abraham was still of primordial form (see below). It was created when God singled out Abraham from among humanity, spoke to him with promises of blessing, and Abraham departed in obedience to his word (Gen 12:1ff.).

We should note the changes in subject of the three sentences A to C. The first sentence (A), derived from Galatians 3:2, takes human beings ("we") as the subject, and the second sentence (B), coming from Galatians 3:5, "God." If, then, *καθώς* ("just as") really functions in making an analogy to God's economy, the third sentence (C), having a man ("Abraham") as its subject, must have much richer content than our simple reading that, by believing God, Abraham was reckoned righteous by God. Note that the roles of God and human beings are *intertwined* in all these sentences. (A) While it is *we* who receive the Spirit, this cannot take

ὑπήκουσαν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ. Ἡσαΐας γὰρ λέγει· κύριε, τίς ἐπίστευσεν τῇ ἀκοῇ ἡμῶν; ἄρα ἡ πίστις ἐξ ἀκοῆς, ἢ δὲ ἀκοὴ διὰ ῥήματος Χριστοῦ). Cf. 1 Thess 2:13, "the word of the message of God" (λόγον ἀκοῆς τοῦ θεοῦ).

⁶ Moo, *Galatians*, 187.

place unless *God* intends to give the Spirit to us. (B) It is certainly *God* who provides us with the Spirit, but the presupposition is that the message is heard and believed by *us*. (C) It is *Abraham* who believed God, but it was *God* who chose and spoke to him in the first place and counted his faith as righteous.

Therefore, a mere analogy between Christians' faith and Abraham's is hardly what Paul means when he quotes Genesis 15:6. Rather, he has the clear intention of explicating *what God did for Abraham when and before he "believed God."* In other words, what God was the God that Abraham came to believe and how he acted for Abraham by calling him were Paul's main concerns, which he thought necessary in explaining to his readers. Only by doing so can he lead them to a correct understanding of what God prepared for Abraham as the foundations of the eschatological saving economy, the *Pistis*, which is now enjoyed by the Galatian Christians.

V. Paul's Quotations from Genesis

What Paul has to say about the foundations of the eschatological saving economy laid by God through the life of Abraham can be inferred from his explicit and implicit quotations in Galatians 3:7-18 (consisting of three paragraphs: vv. 7-9, 10-14, and 15-18). He quotes explicitly from the story of Abraham in Genesis (Gal 3:8 and 16).

Galatians 3:8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God justifies the Gentiles from the *Pistis*, proclaimed the gospel beforehand to Abraham: "All the nations⁷ shall be blessed in you."
 προῖδοῦσα δὲ ἡ γραφή ὅτι ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοῖ τὰ ἔθνη ὁ θεός, προευηγγελίσσατο τῷ Ἀβραάμ ὅτι ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν σοὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη.

Galatians 3:16 Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed; it does not say, "and to the seeds," as toward many; but it says, "and to your seed," as toward one person, who is Christ.
 τῷ δὲ Ἀβραάμ ἐρρέθησαν αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι καὶ τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ. οὐ λέγει· καὶ τοῖς σπέρμασιν, ὡς ἐπὶ πολλῶν ἀλλ' ὡς ἐφ' ἑνός· καὶ τῷ σπέρματί σου, ὅς ἐστιν Χριστός.

The quotation "All the nations shall be blessed in you" in Galatians 3:8 is a combination from Genesis 12:3 ("And in you shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed" [καὶ ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν σοὶ πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς]) and from 18:18 ("But surely Abraham shall become a great and populous nation, and in him shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" [Ἀβρααμ δὲ γινόμενος ἔσται εἰς ἔθνος μέγα καὶ πολὺ, καὶ ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν αὐτῷ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη τῆς γῆς]). In Galatians 3:16, "and to your seed" (καὶ τῷ σπέρματί σου) is taken from Genesis 13:15, 17:8, and 24:7.⁸ Akin to this, the phrase "to your seed" (without "and") appears in Genesis 12:7 and 15:18 (cf. Gen 13:16; 15:5; 17:7; 21:12; 22:17-18).

While all the quoted and related verses are meaningful, let us focus our attention on Genesis 12:3 (Gal 3:8) and 24:7 (Gal 3:16). The former comprises part of God's initial words (calling and promising) spoken to Abraham when he *was still* in Haran. Hearing and obeying the call of God, he moved from his country for whichever land God would show him. Genesis

⁷ τὰ ἔθνη, which means "the nations" in LXX, is used in the sense of "the Gentiles" in Paul's texts.

⁸ Genesis 24:7 LXX differs from the Hebrew bible in several respects. Among others, the Greek text reads "God of the earth" and "to you," which are lacking in the Hebrew text.

24:7, comprising Abraham's words to his servant, smacks of a confession: "The Lord, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my birth" (κύριος ὁ θεὸς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ὁ θεὸς τῆς γῆς, ὃς ἔλαβέν με ἐκ τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ πατρός μου καὶ ἐκ τῆς γῆς, ἧς ἐγενήθην. cf. 15:7). As a blessed old man (24:1), he is now recalling how God called and took him from his birthplace at the outset of their relationship. In the story of Abraham in Genesis, his "justification by faith" (Gen 15:6) comes in the period framed by these two epochs. This means that we should understand Paul's aim of quoting Genesis 15:6 in Galatians 3:6 to be in close relation to Genesis 12:1-3 and 24:7 quoted—if not entirely—in other places in Galatians 3.

In Galatians 3:8, Paul interprets God's promise to Abraham, "all the nations shall be blessed in you" (Gen 12:3; 18:18), as a warranty of the eschatological truth that God justifies the Gentiles from the *Pistis*. In so doing, he uses a rare word προεὐαγγελίζομαι ("to proclaim the gospel beforehand"). This does not mean "to proclaim a preliminary form of the gospel." According to Paul, the promise given to Abraham differs in no respect from the content of the gospel Paul and others are now preaching. The "gospel" told beforehand to Abraham was an assurance that God would justify the Gentiles from the *Pistis* (v. 8a). Since it was the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, Abraham's seed (Gal 3:16), which made come true this eschatological saving economy of God, the "gospel proclaimed beforehand to Abraham" is nothing other than the "gospel of Christ" (Gal 1:7-9, 11; 2:2) or the "gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David [hence from Abraham] according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead" (Rom 1:3-4, NRSV).

Strictly speaking, the formula "from the *Pistis*" (Gal 3:7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 24; 5:5) pertains to Christians "in the last days" (Acts 2:17), and not directly to Abraham. Galatians 3:7 reads as follows: "Know therefore that those [who are] of the *Pistis*, these are the sons of Abraham" (γινώσκετε ἄρα ὅτι οἱ ἐκ πίστεως, οὗτοι υἱοὶ εἰσιν Ἀβραάμ). Paul's conclusion (signaled by "therefore") is drawn from what he discussed in the preceding section (Gal 3:1-6), *not just* from 3:6 (as is suggested by the paragraph division and punctuation of the NA²⁸). Paul is taking pains to prove the authenticity of his gospel originating from the *Pistis*, and to that end, he explains in Galatians 3:7-18 how God laid the foundations of the eschatological economy, quoting from the story of Abraham in Genesis.

In Galatians 3:9, Paul concludes the section (vv. 7-9) with the following statement: "For this reason, those [who are] of the *Pistis* are blessed with the *pistos* Abraham" (ὥστε οἱ ἐκ πίστεως εὐλογοῦνται σὺν τῷ πιστῷ Ἀβραάμ). This verse does not contain any explicit quotation from the story of Abraham, but we would be justified in recognizing here an allusion to Genesis 22:17-18:

¹⁷... and your seed shall inherit the cities of their enemies. ¹⁸And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because *you have obeyed my voice*.

¹⁷... καὶ κληρονομήσει τὸ σπέρμα σου τὰς πόλεις τῶν ὑπεναντίων· ¹⁸καὶ ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν τῷ σπέρματι σου πάντα τὰ ἔθνη τῆς γῆς, ἀνθ' ὧν ὑπήκουσας τῆς ἐμῆς φωνῆς (בְּרַעְיָא תַּעֲמֹד וְיִבְרַח).

The content of these verses is similar to that of Genesis 12:2-3 and 18:18. We can hear clear resonances of God's promises when he called and took him out, although Genesis 22:18 has "in your seed" instead of "in you" (Gen 12:2-3; 18:18).

What does Paul's expression "*pistos* Abraham" mean? It is usually construed as referring to his belief or faith (so the NRSV says, "Abraham who believed" and the NIV, "Abraham, the man of faith"). In the context of Genesis 22, however, the adjective πιστός can naturally be taken in the sense of "faithful." Two documents in the Second Temple period, earlier than Paul's time, interpret Genesis 22:18 in terms of Abraham's faithfulness.

Ben Sira 44:19-21 ¹⁹Abraham [was] a great father of many nations [Gen 17:5], and no one was found like him in glory; ²⁰Who kept the law of the Most High, and entered into a covenant with him: he established the covenant in his flesh [Gen 17:24, 26], and in trial he was found *faithful* [Gen 22, esp. v. 18]. ²¹Therefore he assured him with an oath, that the nations would be blessed in his seed [Gen 22:18] ...

¹⁹Αβρααμ μέγας πατήρ πλήθους ἐθνῶν, καὶ οὐχ εὐρέθη ὅμοιος ἐν τῇ δόξῃ. ²⁰ὃς συνετήρησεν νόμον ὑψίστου καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν διαθήκῃ μετ' αὐτοῦ· ἐν σαρκὶ αὐτοῦ ἔστησεν διαθήκην καὶ ἐν πειρασμῷ εὐρέθη πιστός. ²¹διὰ τοῦτο ἐν ὄρκῳ ἔστησεν αὐτῷ ἐνευλογηθῆναι ἔθνη ἐν σπέρματι αὐτοῦ ...

1 Maccabees 2:52 Was not Abraham found *faithful* in trial [Gen 22], and it was reckoned to him as righteousness [Gen 15:6]?

Αβρααμ οὐχὶ ἐν πειρασμῷ εὐρέθη πιστός, καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην;

The author of the Wisdom of Ben Sira interpreted Genesis 22:17-18 in close linkage with Genesis 17:9-14, where God's covenant by circumcision is prescribed. The extant Greek text is a translation by the author's grandson. The original אשר שמר מצות עליי ("Who kept the commandments of the Most High") he translated thus: "Who kept the law of the Most High." God's commandments are not necessarily identical to the Mosaic law (Torah), but the translator takes the word in this sense. In fact, the existence of the law in the days of Abraham came to be believed widely among the rabbis (e.g., *Gen. Rab.* 56.11; *b. Yoma* 28b). The original author summarized the whole story of Genesis 22 using the expression ובניסוי נמצא נאמן, and the grandson translated it correctly: "and in trial he was found faithful." On the other hand, the Septuagint translates the Hebrew text of Genesis 22:18b almost verbatim: ἀνθ' ὧν ὑπήκουσας τῆς ἐμῆς φωνῆς ("because you have obeyed my voice").

VI. *The Meaning of "Pistos Abraham" in the Pauline Context*

Paul must have known Ben Sira and 1 Maccabees and their interpretations of Genesis 22. He would not have agreed, however, with the former regarding the existence of the law in the days of Abraham (Gal 3:17, on which see below) and would have certainly protested against the latter concerning its view connecting one's faithfulness in trial with God's reckoning of righteousness (cf. Jam 2:21-24). Yet, Genesis 22:17-18 certainly had an important meaning for Paul, because here are repeated God's initial promises: the blessing of Abraham (Gen 12:2-3; 18:18), the multiplication of his descendants (13:16; 15:5; 17:2, 6), and the blessing of the nations in his seed (cf. 12:3; 18:18). Moreover, Genesis 22:18b, "because you have obeyed my voice," employs the verb ὑπακούω ("to obey" or "to be subject to"), which is fundamental in Paul's theology.

This verb is used to refer to the obedient death of Christ in Philippians 2:8 ("he humbled

himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross” [ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ]). In Romans 5:19 he says something similar using the corresponding noun ὑπακοή (“obedience”): “For just as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous” (ὥσπερ γὰρ διὰ τῆς παρακοῆς τοῦ ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου ἁμαρτωλοὶ κατεστάθησαν οἱ πολλοί, οὕτως καὶ διὰ τῆς ὑπακοῆς τοῦ ἑνὸς δίκαιοι κατασταθήσονται οἱ πολλοί). Significantly, Paul’s discussion in Romans is framed by the formula “for the obedience of the *Pistis*” (εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίστεως) in 1:5 and 16:26. In our holistic interpretation, it means the type of obedience originating from the *Pistis*. A similar expression by means of the verb appears in Acts 6:7: “[T]he word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the *Pistis*” (ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἠύξανεν καὶ ἐπληθύνετο ὁ ἀριθμὸς τῶν μαθητῶν ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ σφόδρα, πολὺς τε ὄχλος τῶν ἱερέων ὑπήκουον τῇ πίστει).

This type of obedience to God is not the same as “keeping the law of the Most High” as stressed in the Wisdom of Ben Sira. It originates from, and is nurtured in, the *Pistis*, God’s saving economy, into which one is incorporated by believing the gospel. Abraham’s obedience narrated in Genesis 22 has nothing to do with keeping the law. It resembles the obedience of the *Pistis*, because it sprung from, and was nurtured in, his faith relation with God. It began when God called him with promises and Abraham responded obediently. It is probable that this is part of the meaning of the adjective πιστός in Galatians 3:9: “For this reason, those [who are] of the *Pistis* are blessed with the *pistos* Abraham.” Since, however, Galatians 3:9 is the conclusion of verses 7-9, its full meaning should be determined from the context. It certainly bears undertones of believing or faith. We can read in Paul’s use of the adjective here the meaning of both “obedient” and “having faith” (or “believing”). It cannot be translated using any single English word; it would be better to use “pistos” having both senses as a loanword from Greek.

It is true that Paul rarely uses πιστός in the sense of “faithful” in his letters. However, in 1 Corinthians 4:2, he says that “it is required of servant managers that each one should be found faithful” (ζητεῖται ἐν τοῖς οἰκονόμοις, ἵνα πιστός τις εὑρεθῇ). Here, he does not discuss the faithfulness of believers or servants in general, but that required of “servant managers” (cf. 1 Cor 4:17; Col 1:7; 4:7, 9). In Paul’s eyes, Abraham had a mission far more important, because given the promise that “all the nations shall be blessed in you” (Gen 12:3; 18:18), he had to face a nonunderstandable trial by God to order him to offer his only son Isaac (Gen 22:2). Throughout the trial he obeyed God, followed by a renewal of the promise: “And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.”

VII. *Covenant and 430 Years*

Many scholars opine that by the word “covenant” (διαθήκη) in Galatians 3:17, Paul means “the promises” (v. 16, αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι) God gave to Abraham (cf. 3:17, 18, 19 [verb], 21, 22, 29; 4:23, 28; sing. except in 3:16 and 21). However, the concept of a covenant is not the same as that of a promise and, even in this context, they do not seem to be synonymous. In the story of Genesis, God enters into a covenant with Abraham, first in 15:7-21 and again in 17:23-27. The former event occurred apparently soon after Abraham “believed God, and it was reckoned to

him as righteousness” (15:6). The latter is closely coupled with a command to circumcise (17:9-14).

Genesis 15:18 On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram (διέθετο κύριος τῷ Ἀβραμ διαθήκην), saying, “To your seed (Τῷ σπέρματι σου) I will give this land ...”

Genesis 17:10, 23 ¹⁰And this is the covenant, which you shall fully keep, between me and you [pl.], and between [me and] your seed after you (καὶ αὕτη ἡ διαθήκη, ἣν διατηρήσεις, ἀνὰ μέσον ἐμοῦ καὶ ὑμῶν καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ σπέρματός σου μετὰ σέ) for their generations; every male of you shall be circumcised. ²³And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all his home-born servants ... and he circumcised their foreskins in the time of that day, according as God had spoken to him.

There is another section where God speaks of his covenantal will to Abraham: Genesis 17:1-8. Interestingly, while here are retold God’s previous promises to Abraham and his seed (Gen 12:2, 7; 13:15-17; 15:7, 18), there is no mention of circumcision in this section.

Genesis 17:2, 4, 7 ²And I will make my covenant between me and you (καὶ θήσομαι τὴν διαθήκην μου ἀνὰ μέσον ἐμοῦ καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον σοῦ), and I will multiply you exceedingly.

⁴And I—Look! my covenant [is] with you (ἡ διαθήκη μου μετὰ σοῦ), and you shall be a father of a multitude of nations. ⁷And I will establish my covenant (καὶ στήσω τὴν διαθήκην μου) between me and you, and between [me and] your seed after you, to their generations, for an everlasting covenant (εἰς διαθήκην αἰώνιον), to be your God and the God of your seed after you.

It is unclear whether or not Genesis 17:1-8 goes with 17:9ff. The NRSV treats them under the same heading “The Sign of the Covenant,” while the ISV separates Genesis 17:1-8 from 17:9-14. In any case, we can safely conclude that, at the level of Paul’s discussion in Galatians 3:17, the “covenant” pertains not only to Genesis 15:7-21 but also to 17:1-8 that comprises a retelling of God’s promises. The question is whether Paul can ignore Genesis 17:23-27 in his explanation in Galatians 3. Space limitation does not allow me to address this question, but it is probable, in my view, that Paul includes even the circumcision-involving covenant when he refers to “the covenant previously ratified by God” in Galatians 3:17. In conclusion, I maintain that Paul uses the word “covenant” as an *umbrella term* to cover the content of the covenant-related texts of Genesis (15:7-21; 17:1-8; and probably 17:9-14, 23-27) in connection to God’s promises to Abraham.

In Galatians 3:17, Paul stresses that “the law, which came four hundred thirty years later, does not annul the covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise” (διαθήκην προκεκυρωμένην ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ μετὰ τετρακόσια καὶ τριάκοντα ἔτη γεγωνὸς νόμος οὐκ ἀκυροῖ εἰς τὸ καταργῆσαι τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν). We should rivet our eyes on his mention of “four hundred thirty years later” and his use of a rare word “previously ratified.” The “four hundred thirty years” must be a quotation, not from Genesis 15:13 (“for four hundred years”) but from the LXX version of Exodus 12:40: “And the sojourning of the children of Israel, while they sojourned in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, [was] four hundred and thirty years” (ἡ δὲ κατοίκησις τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ, ἣν κατώκησαν ἐν γῇ Αἰγύπτῳ καὶ ἐν γῇ Χανααν, ἔτη τετρακόσια τριάκοντα). The Greek version has “and in the land of Canaan,” which is missing from the Hebrew text (cf. Josephus, *Ant.*, 2.318).⁹ This indicates that by “four hundred thirty

years later" Paul means the period from *Abraham's coming to Canaan* (Gen 12:1-5) down to the Israelites' receiving of the Mosaic law at Mt. Sinai (Exod 19:1ff.).

The meaning of "previously ratified" should also be determined in this connection (*not* "previously established" as in the NIV). Paul does not compare the Abrahamic covenant made in Genesis 15:18 with the Mosaic covenant (the "law") that came later (Exod 19:5; 24:7, 8). Since the "covenant" in Galatians 3:17 is used as an umbrella term to cover the covenant-related texts (Gen 15:7-21 and 17:1-8 in particular) in connection to God's promises as a whole, the time of the "previous ratification" must be placed not in Genesis 15 but at the outset of Genesis 12, when God chooses Abraham and orders him to go out from his country, with promises of blessing. In other words, God "ratified" the "covenant" he would later establish with Abraham "previously" at the time of his choosing and speaking to him.

VIII. *Proto-Pistis*

Abraham "believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness" (Gal 3:6; Gen 15:6). However, it was not what happened in the first place. God's will goes ahead of everything; it is God who chose and spoke to him with promises. Obeying God's call, Abraham left his country for the land God would show him (Gen 12:1ff.). Although the Scripture is silent on whether Abraham "believed God" at that time, it seems certain that something like a "relation of faith" was at that time established between God and Abraham through the word of the "gospel" (Gal 3:8; Gen 12:3b). Moreover, this relation of faith was destined to grow stronger by God's will to speak repeatedly to Abraham with promises and the latter's obedient responses. It was within this relation that Abraham "believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness."

We should note three essential characteristics of this series of incidents. (1) The "relation of faith" preceded Abraham's "justification by faith." (2) Abraham's faith means not only that he believed God's promises concerning the birth of his "very own issue" and the multiplication of his seed (Gen 15:4-5), but also that he relied on a faithful, omnipotent God (cf. Rom 3:3-4; Gen 14:22 LXX, "the most high God, who made the heaven and the earth"). (3) The reckoning as righteousness is salvific. Abraham's "justification by faith" took place within a certain saving system or economy. This economy certainly stems from the "relation of faith" already established between God and Abraham, but we cannot consider them identical. While the former is surely salvific, the latter, in itself, is not necessarily linked to justification, in spite of its essential connection with the "gospel."

It is plain, from Paul's discussion in Galatians 3, that God's justifying economy prepared for Abraham involves God who is believed, Abraham who believes, and two other essential elements: Abraham's "seed" Christ (3:16) and the gospel proclaimed beforehand (3:8). We should be careful not to mistake Paul's wording. In Galatians 3:16, he says: "Now the promises were *spoken* to Abraham and *to* his seed." Nowhere in Genesis do we find a sentence like "God spoke a promise to Abraham's seed." Genesis 13:15, for instance, says that "for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your seed (σοὶ δώσω αὐτὴν καὶ τῷ σπέρματί σου)

⁹ For the Jewish background of "430 years," see Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (WBC, 41. Dallas: Word, 1990) 133.

forever.” Paul’s exegesis seems somewhat odd to our eyes, but it would be more appropriate to interpret what he says literally. He appears to take it for granted that Christ already exists with God. In fact, it is logically impossible for anyone to speak a promise to someone who does *not* exist there. Paul’s discussion in Galatians 4:4, “God *sent his Son*, born of a woman, born under the law,” seems to be in keeping with this. God’s Son Christ existed with God “when the fullness of time had come” (cf. Phil 2:6-8). How Paul’s Christology is related to the Son of Man messiology of “The Book of Parables” (1 Enoch 37-71) is an interesting but difficult issue.

Thus, the justifying or saving economy God prepared for Abraham involves God who is believed, Abraham who believes, and Abraham’s “seed” Christ, and the gospel that “all the nations shall be blessed in Abraham,” whose realized form, according to Paul, is that “God justifies the Gentiles from the *Pistis*” (Gal 3:8). It has almost the same structure as God’s eschatological saving economy, the *Pistis*. We should not think of the two systems as separate. Paul probably thought the former to be a primordial form of the latter. For Paul they are one and the same saving economy of God. However, we cannot but see one important structural difference between them: The eschatological saving economy involves the Spirit, but the justifying economy for Abraham does not. The Spirit is essentially an eschatological agent (Gal 3:2, 3, 5; 4:6; 5:5, 16, 18, 22, 25; Acts 2:1-13, 14-21, 33, 38; Joel 3:1-5; Isa 32:15-18; 44:1-5; 59: 21; Eze 11:17-20; 36:24-28; 37:1-14). This was not known to Abraham. So let us distinguish them by calling the economy God established for Abraham “proto-*Pistis*.” This is like a growing tree; a tree does not bear fruit in its youth, but the same tree does when it reaches maturity (Gal 6:8).